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ABSTRACT

Community education once was an educational philosophy aimed at improving public schools and the communities they served. Today, community education may well offer a promise of salvation for American education. This book, containing six chapters, questions the present authoritarian, hierarchial American public school establishment. Beginning with a brief history of the first democratically inspired community schools in Flint, Michigan, chapter 1, "A Vision as a Target That Beckons," portrays the original vision and goals of the Flint movement and the unintended consequences of the community school concept as it spread across the country. In chapter 2, "The Search for Educational Excellence," the current wisdom expressed in most of the excellence studies is challenged. The emphasis in chapter 3, "What to Do about America's Schools?" is placed on returning public educational to the public. Chapter 4 asks: "Government Schools or Public Schools?" The establishment's wisdom regarding school organization and management is addressed in chapter 5, "Myths and Other Obsolete Notions." The final chapter is dedicated to champions of community education from 1935 to the present, highlighting the rich history of articles, monographs, newsletters, books, and films on community education. An epilogue is included, and the bibliography contains 77 references. (KM)

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The Sovereign

New Perspectives on People, Power, and Public Education

Vasil M. Kerensky

KENDALL/HUNT PUBLISHING COMPANY
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Dedicated to the Three M's of Community Education
CHARLES STEWART MOTT—1875–1973
FRANK J. MANLEY—1903–1972
ERNEST O. MELBY—1891–1987

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Foreword

As educational "experts" seek the causes and cures for declining school and student performance, the specter of the demise of the American Dream haunts reformers. The current emphasis on reform, which has been dubbed the "excellence movement," places its major stress on America's competitive position in a dramatically restructured world economy. To some, the current school performance trends are so frightening and bleak that measures calling for centralized, uniform, universally enforced prescriptions for educational reform have become the order of the day.

In all this thrashing around, the citizens with their common wisdom have not played their rightful part in establishing the current visions of school reform or restructuring. There are many voices in the school establishment, most holding earned credentials, that call public involvement in school matters intrusive and ill informed. They would, for the sake of the emergency, turn to centralized, elitist solutions from on high. Supporters of this closed decision-making process and advocates of centralized changes often argue that the citizenry has given up on public education. This leaves a vacuum that the designated experts feel they must fill to save us from ourselves. For students of history, this scenario has a familiar, ominous ring.

This analysis by Professor Vasil Kerensky rings true to me in my lifelong quest to foster openness, truth, and the democratic tradition in all our nation's institutions and establishments. In my years of observing and reporting on the American scene, my faith in the people as sovereign has not been shaken. The United States has no tradition of a king, monarch, tsar, or other designated royalty who has ruled as sovereign. In some parts of the world today, the state is viewed as sovereign. American democracy is unique in that the people are the sovereign under the law of the land established by the people, for the people.

The Sovereign proposes a strategy for public empowerment through the community education philosophy. Community schools prosper in all parts of the land, as well as in many democratic nations, and they are making a significant difference through community involvement in school decision making. *The Sovereign* argues that true education is a community enterprise and that a meaningful education is both open and continuous. It further argues that schools that are not responsive to their communities have little chance for success, let alone excellence.

Kerensky suggests that in far too many instances, especially in our larger school districts, the school establishment has given up on the public. With his colleagues in community education, Kerensky suggests some needed paradigm shifts that will restore confidence, participation, and ownership in these schools by the sovereigns of the schools—the American people. Kerensky further argues that two fundamental issues are at stake. First, we must accept the long overdue task of restructuring public education in light of the dramatic societal and economic shifts that are restructuring America. Second, and more important, these changes must be made in the spirit of openness, trust, and public accountability that has characterized 200 years of American democratic tradition.

Jack Anderson
Syndicated Columnist
Washington, D.C.

Prologue

This book tells the story of a public shut out of public education. But its message is not criticism; it is a challenge. Public education *must* be returned to the public. And with community education, it can be.

There is little disagreement that public education is in trouble. Regrettably, many of its critics argue that state master plans, state-imposed compulsory testing, and tighter state controls of curriculum are the solutions to public education's problems. This work will examine whether a free, democratic, entrepreneurial society can afford the risk of turning one of its primary institutions—public education—into a monolith that does not honor freedom of choice, diversity, and faith in the uncommon wisdom of the common man. Closed societies pay a high price in loss of freedom and creativity for their controlled, restricted systems. So, we are learning, do closed schools.

If the failure of schools to meet the needs of children stems from factors outside the school, future success will hinge on the school's ability to open up and cope with community problems. All the internal reorganization and modification in the world will continue to produce dismal results until schools come to grips with the external problems that limit the education of children.

A multitude of national and state reports (39 at last count) have recounted the perceived weaknesses of public education and have offered solutions. This book will argue that it is time to revisit the philosophy of community education and the concept of the community school. The story of community education and the quiet support it has received in thousands of communities over the past 50 years needs to be told.

"It's the community that keeps us in business," says one community educator. Too often, school administrators forget this. They are reluctant to share the facilities, the site, the budget, and especially their decision-making authority with the public. But there is a growing awareness of the inadequacy

of an education that depends only on "schooling" in a school. The developments of the last three decades in education have challenged our classical concepts of school-centered education, but still we lack a cohesive strategy for achieving the education of all of our people, both children and adults.

Community education, comprehensively defined, offers such an educational strategy. It assumes that education is lifelong, that it occurs not only in schools but also in the home, in the workplace, and in the rich voluntary life of the community. A community that embraces the philosophy that education is lifelong and that we all have something to contribute will help create a sense of responsibility and belonging in its citizens. The society is more likely to pull together, and the contribution of each person will be magnified by the synergetic effect of community effort.

Human energy is the power that transforms the goals, aims, and objectives of an organization or institution into a reality. As the present educational system strives to cope with the challenges of our times and the consequences of future change, our current schooling system, methods, and procedures will become increasingly obsolete. Within the confines of the school, the boundless energies and talents of administrators, teachers, and students are tragically underused. The system, the structure, the time constraints, all tend to restrict and stultify incentives to learn. Believing that education is limited to the four walls of the school or the cyclone-fenced boundaries of the campus, the educational establishment convinces itself that the barriers to excellence are found beyond the property line. But by protecting the school's turf, the establishment turns its back on the community.

Today, the United States is in a stage of dramatic transition. As educators, we have seen in the past decade an unprecedented wave of immigration, growing numbers of poor and homeless families, shifting values, and increasing competition in the world marketplace. It is almost axiomatic that populations subjected to dramatic change are action-oriented, because action is the most obvious way to gain new confidence and reassert a sense of self-worth. As Eric Hoffer puts it, "[D]rastic change is one of the agencies which releases man's energies . . . provided there is an abundance of opportunities and a tradition of self-reliance. Given these conditions, a population subjected to dramatic change will plunge into an orgy of action."[1]

There has never been a better time for community education—the rediscovery of our community's power to nurture individual growth, group action, and national pride. By opening minds and schools, community education opens up a brave new world of possibility: the opportunity for action toward powerful change.

Introduction

It takes courage and inspiration to write a book on educational restructuring in this day and age, when so much has been said and re-said. The distinguished, and sometimes simply the verbose, have had their day. But I believe there is a place in education literature for *The Sovereign*, a book that has been 10 years in the making. It has been more than a decade since *Education II*, which I co-authored with Ernest O. Melby, called for the return of public education to the public through the concept of community education. This work picks up with many of the ideas we advocated in *Education II*.

Parts of *The Sovereign* were completed in Spain. Viewing America from afar made me keenly aware of the number of choices involved in how we process information about the world we live in, and how our society and culture fit within it. The choices of information frequencies beyond the printed page range from gang laws, group norms, and television to computer networking. So it takes some mettle to set one's roaming mind's eye on the educational scene after 30 years and translate those perceptions into a book.

Compounding the situation, books are no longer the primary means of communication. In an age of instantaneous information, few books make an impact. Our age is unlike the days in 1920 when my mother arrived in America from a village in Macedonia. To her, "The book was excitement—my window to America and all its promises." Today, different 12-year-olds are arriving on our shores, and they have more choices, both good and bad, in selecting the window through which they will view America.

Work on the two editions of *Education II* took much less courage, but just about as much time. A decade ago, Ernest O. Melby, with more than 60 years of experience, held the philosophical tiller, and together we broke some educationally sacred eggs—but apparently not enough to cause much attention or change in the establishment. The situation today for America's public schools seems even more desperate than it was 10 years ago. Community education

once was an educational philosophy aimed at *improving* public schools and the communities they served. Today, community education may well offer a promise of *salvation* for American public education.

Inspiration and courage seem somehow intertwined. Can we have one without the other? My late father, an immigrant from Bulgaria, had a way with ideas in spite of his heavy accent and labored English. He was a student of the American democratic process. He knew the name of every U.S. Senator and House of Representatives member, and how each stood with respect to F.D.R. He repeatedly admonished me, "Hit the snake on the head if you want to kill it!" He exhibited and exemplified the extraordinary wisdom of the common man. He always wanted to get to the root of the problem. This work will seek to extend the common sense my father embodied so well.

This is a book about public education and public school, with new emphasis on the word "public"—a public that has been too often closed out of public education. Florida community education leader Marjorie Pearlson says, "The only way we'll solve this mess is to get the 'public' back in public education"—by opening all the schools to all people of all ages at all times.

An important assumption underpinning this work is that all individuals are both learners and teachers from day one to the end. Individuals will only engage in learning and teaching when they are ready and motivated to benefit from the experience. A second set of assumptions is based on my belief in the importance of public schools to maintaining America's free enterprise and democratic traditions. Viewed from abroad in the summer of 1986 (especially from Spain, which lost its freedom for over 40 years), the preciousness and uniqueness of American openness, the acceptance of individual differences, the free enterprise system, and the democratic decision-making process stand in bold opposition to totalitarian and authoritarian systems.

The uniqueness that is America owes a great debt to public education, and in turn, public education in America has only been possible because of the wisdom of the nation's founding fathers. For 200 years, Americans standing on the shoulders of the founders have held the charted course of freedom (although not always perfectly), and we are still the freest of the free.

This inquiry, from an open and emphatic champion of public schools, will question the present authoritarian, hierarchical public school establishment. In some settings, the public schools operate in contradiction to the tenets of free enterprise and democratic decision making. The school establishment spokesman often laments that the public has given up on the public schools. This volume challenges that "establishment wisdom" and strongly suggests that the school establishment has given up on the public. This is no less true for many educators who fly the community education banner. Where is the

community in community education? You have to look all night with a flashlight to find a citizen at some community education conferences. But it doesn't have to be that way. And that is the thesis of this book.

The Sovereign begins with a brief, broad-brush history of the idea and ideals of the first democratically inspired community schools, in Flint, Michigan, in the 1930s. The trials and tribulations of the second-generation community school advocates who fanned out across the nation follow. If one of the issues in this excellence movement is a battle for meaningful substance, civilian control, and renewed citizen involvement, the Mott Fellows who came out of Flint in the 1960s and early 1970s are veteran freedom fighters, battling for years for increased citizen involvement.

Part 1, "A Vision as a Target that Beckons" (title credit to Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus[1]), portrays the original vision and goals of the Flint movement, and some of the unintended consequences of the community school concept as it spread across the country.

In Part 2, "The Search for Educational Excellence," the current wisdom expressed in most of the excellence studies is challenged. Changes inside the schoolhouse do not show much promise for success. At the core of the problem is a decision-making process that is becoming increasingly authoritarian—in some places almost totalitarian. A free society can ill afford to allow one of its primary institutions to become less than democratic for the sake of efficiency, or, for that matter, any other reason.

Part 3 addresses the question, "What To Do About America's Schools?" Emphasis will be placed on how to return public education to the public. One point is repeatedly made: that even the best-intentioned educational leader cannot attend to the diverse public that makes up America within the current monolithic and bureaucratic school structure.

Although this text paints with a broad brush, it is not a white brush. Even in those schools that are designated as community schools, all is not well. Too often the idea has been co-opted and squeezed into smaller and smaller bureaucratic niches. Part 4, "Government Schools or Public Schools?", shows how the vision of community schools can be trivialized and even lost in the hands of those struggling to be survivors in the educational establishment.

Part 5, "Myths and Other Obsolete Notions," questions the establishment wisdom about how schools should be organized and managed. You need not go back to Greek or Roman mythology to understand how myths shape individual and societal behavior. Myths undergird much of the current school establishment, to the detriment of students and the public.

The final chapter is dedicated to champions of community education from 1935 to the present, highlighting the rich history of articles, monographs, newsletters, books, and films on community education. This book, I hope, will encourage teachers and learners to look further into the philosophical and practical applications of the concept. The final chapter will also suggest some needed restructuring of our thinking about the future of America's public schools.

Throughout this book, I advocate the "percolator" concept of decision making—decision making that arises from a base of local initiatives and public involvement. This is in stark contrast to the top-down decisionmaking process that exists within the school establishment today. There is a role for the federal government, state government, and the existing larger school districts in the future of education once the public is given new empowerment. But that role will require bold shifts of thinking and action. Thomas Kuhn's idea of paradigm shifts has been very useful to me in sorting through the paradoxes and ironies inherent in the current scholastic structure. Although there can be no prescriptions for empowerment, some paradigm shifts at the national, state, and local levels are envisioned for future (perhaps *near* future) consideration.

Part 1

A Vision as a Target That Beckons

Chapter Contents

The Lighted Schoolhouse Concept
The Mott Program
The Funding Dilemma
Lessons Learned in the Mobilization of an Idea
Where Is Community Education Today?

A Vision as a Target That Beckons

It has been more than 50 years since the Flint, Michigan, Public Schools, with support from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, opened the first community school in the modern era. This opening of the first of a new generation of community schools is vividly depicted in the award-winning 1965 film, "To Touch a Child."[1] In 1935, five more community schools opened to respond to the social and economic crisis engulfing Flint and the rest of America as a result of what has become known as the Great Depression.

One of the architects of this new concept was Frank Manley, an educator with a recreation background who sought to fight the apathy brought about, in his words, by the four I's of community malaise:

- Indifference
- Intolerance
- Ignorance
- Inertia

Manley's "eloquently simple" idea was to view education as a community enterprise rather than a schoolhouse phenomenon. He suggested four alternative I's:

- In
- Interest
- Informed
- Involved

If we could bring the community *in*, the result would be renewed *interest*, which would result in a community becoming *informed* and *involved*.

The first step in developing community schools was to open the school doors to all community members. A widely quoted metaphor by William G. Carr had a significant impact on opening the schools in the early 1940s.

> Many schools are like islands set apart from the mainland of life by a deep moat of convention and tradition. A drawbridge is lowered at certain periods during the day in order that the part-time inhabitants may cross over to the island in the morning and back to the mainland at night.[2]

The premise of opening schools for broader community use seemed straightforward enough. In every community, one finds millions of dollars of taxpayer money invested in school housing. If the funds are used only for kindergarten to twelfth grade students, from 8 A.M. to 3 P.M., there would appear to be a space vacuum after 3 P.M., as well as during weekends and the summer

months. Manley, with the support of the Mott Foundation and a cadre of local and national figures, began questioning the padlocking of school buildings and the fencing that closed school playgrounds after 3 P.M. Could these schools be opened "after hours" for constructive community use?

The idea was logical, but from the very beginning serious problems became evident. For starters, freedom for community members to use their public schools for educational, recreational, cultural, and social activities outside the "normal" school day threatened the security of some members of the school establishment.

A sense of *freedom* for some and a sense of *security* for others came into conflict. The classroom teachers who did not want to share their workplace, be it gym, shop, or classroom, voiced objections. The new idea also threatened many school principals. Keeping the existing faculty and staff in the school system happy was of more immediate priority for most principals than any risk or venture in creating greater community involvement and satisfaction. Added to internal staff consideration was the problem of control. Even as far back as the late 1930s, school principalship was becoming a more demanding and often frustrating occupation. Why increase the demands placed on the school principalship by virtually doubling the number of hours in the school day and keeping school open in the summer?

Those who felt that the school role in the community extended no further than keeping normal school hours argued, We don't have sufficient funds for the K–12 program. Why extend limited school resources into new arenas?

When presented with evidence of the positive things that happen once a school is opened to community use, they found other reasons to argue. These are functions of other agencies, they said. School maintenance and security will suffer. And, anyway, schools have no business attempting to address community problems.

Some even suggested that the schools were doing all they could under the present structure, and this idea was social meddling, social engineering, that could result in dangerous precedents.

Slowly at first, but with growing momentum, the objections gave way, and every school in Flint, Michigan, became a community school by the mid-1960s. And by the late 1970s the idea had spread to all 50 states, the 10 provinces of Canada, and a number of foreign countries. It is important to note that the community education movement in many foreign countries had its own indigenous roots. For example, Henry Morris Village College (community school) in Cambridgeshire, England, was established in the early 1930s. And in the 1930s, many rural schools in America were, in fact, "community schools."

They were the centers for community life. This seems to be especially true in the segregated schools of blacks. The schools were only partly schools, serving as community civic centers as well. Humble as they may have been, they belonged to the people and created a true sense of community.

The idea of opening schools to the public caught hold and captured the imagination of thousands of visitors to Flint, Michigan, in the late 1950s and 1960s. They saw for themselves that the idea worked. Opening schools for community use and taking the lock off the school playground fences was only the beginning of a brighter vision. Essential to the community school success were some very subtle ingredients—threads that began to weave themselves together into an education reform and restructuring movement that became first the community school concept, and then the concept of community education.

It soon became apparent that opening schools for community use was not sufficient. The invitation to use the school for community activities, although important, had to be accompanied by another important decision. In addition to open doors, the school must have an open, warm, and welcoming organizational climate. The first community school practitioners served gallons of free coffee and doughnuts, greeting members of the community personally and giving them a sense of involvement and ownership.

The involvement by the community was by invitation. The key notion was helping people help themselves. *Wants* and *needs* were to be satisfied in that order. It was important to remember that what a community wanted and what a community needed were up to them to decide. Their wants would not always be what some outsider or service provider deemed appropriate. This was an idea based on freedom of choice, and faith in people to sort out wants, needs, and priorities. It also welcomed people to change their individual and collective minds.

This open attitude was not without its problems. In fact, the community education movement over the last 50 years is a vivid illustration of the perennial notion that for every function there is an accompanying dysfunction. From the very beginning, some critics dwelled on the problems rather than the benefits of a community school.

Once given their choice of wants, many community groups chose recreation over academics and special interests over community interests. In the eyes of critics, some came to school only to dance, tie fishing lures, and drink coffee. But it is also true that others went on to become better parents or community leaders, and also sought out vocational and academic enrichment. A growth climate can be contagious; so, too, can a dependency climate.

During the '40s, '50s, and '60s, when the community schools of Flint were becoming America's "lighthouse" of educational opportunity, enabling the people to choose their own wants and needs, forces were also at work on the national scene. Diane Ravitch's *The Troubled Crusade*[3] offers a brilliant and vivid history of the events that were creating a dependency climate and culture in the American educational scene. At the same time that many ordinary people were struggling to open their schools for broader public use that reflected their community culture, other forces were at work to give "freedom of choice" a bad name. *Troubled Crusade* describes the demise of the progressive school movement, the loyalty investigations that touched educators in the late 1940s and early 1950s, and other events that captured center stage. Ravitch recounts the impact of the Brown decision and the resulting close relationship between social science researchers (James Coleman, Kenneth Clark, Harry Passow, Frank Riessman, Martin Deutsch and others) and the law. Americans were increasingly becoming aware that the public schools, once viewed as the open sesame to a free and just society, were in trouble.

The success record of the public schools with the children of the poor was never one of American education's brightest chapters. However, as long as the poor were dispersed through the rural wastelands of America's educational system, the problem could be avoided. With the migration of the poor during and following World War II to urban centers, the problem grew in visibility, and the sheer concentration of the poor magnified it dramatically.

Other outside forces were at work that would dominate the educational scene. The launching of the Soviet Sputnik was viewed in America not so much as a Soviet success story but as vivid proof (for some) of the decaying of American public education. In the '60s, John Gardner's *Excellence,* funded by the Carnegie Foundation, became the most talked-about statement in public education in years. As a philosophical statement, it remains one of the most penetrating reports ever published, although it is seldom mentioned in the studies on excellence that have emerged in the mid-1980s. Gardner contended:

> [T]hose who achieve excellence will be few at best. All too many lack the qualities of mind or spirit which would allow them to conceive excellence as a goal, or to achieve it. . . . But many more can achieve it than now do. And the society is bettered not only by those who achieve it but by those who are trying.[4]

The early 1960s brought another series of crises to the schoolhouse door. The civil rights movement brought home the stark realization that public schools were not only failing to provide the excellence called for, but were less than fair in a search for equality.

As the evidence and frustration mounted, the voices of critics in the media and on university campuses swept the land. The critics did not all agree. There were those who mounted the reform platform following the lead established

by James B. Conant in late 1959 in *The American High School Today*. Conant's traditional educational views had not changed much since 1946, when, as president of Harvard, he called the provisions of the G.I. Bill distressing because they did not "distinguish between those who can profit most by advanced education and those who cannot."[5]

Others called for more radical solutions, with Ivan Illich going so far as to advocate the "deschooling of society." Then there were the widely read idealists like Jonathan Kozol, Nat Hentoff, and John Holt, whom some have labeled the "romantics" of the 1960s and 1970s.

Whether romantic, reformer, or radical, the critics had one thing in common: they spoke from a platform that was outside and above the trenches—the public schools. Those in the trenches viewed many of the statements as "black papers": unfair, biased, and isolated exposés. They saw many of the critics as turncoats who had left the school establishment to capitalize on exposing insurmountable problems within it. Many school administrators viewed some critics as elitists with unrealistic expectations. The school bureaucracies dug in deeper with more rules, regulations, and targeted selection programs usually funded under a federal title. The gulf between the practitioner and the academics widened; citizen philosophers (the public) were relegated to the background.

All of this controversy was played against a backdrop of a mass migration from rural areas to suburban and urban America, with the poor minorities headed for the urban areas, and those with any economic means heading for the suburbs.

But even before the population shift from rural to suburban and urban America, the consolidation of small school districts into consolidated and comprehensive high school districts was in full swing. In 1947, Florida consolidated all its local school districts into 67 county-wide districts. The consolidation movement in other states, such as Michigan, moved toward unifying all small schools within a given township (36 square miles) into one school district. These large school districts were often created over the strong objections of many small villages, hamlets, and towns that feared the loss of community identity, their own school boards, their own football team and band, and their own community pride in local graduates.

With larger geographic boundaries, often comprised of miles of open land and one consolidated high school, the stage was set for the creation of large multiple-high-school districts, once the empty fields became housing tracts.

In the late 1940s it was not uncommon for many urban areas—cities like Pontiac, Michigan; Midland, Texas; or Fort Lauderdale, Florida—to have one central high school with an appropriate feeder system of elementary and junior high schools under the jurisdiction of a local school board. School districts with more than one high school were the exception rather than the rule.

As urbanization and suburbanization took hold, both the size of individual schools and the number of schools under the jurisdiction of a single board increased dramatically. Many suburban school districts grew larger than the adjoining city schools. As size increased, span of control increased, and public access to school decision-making on matters both large and small decreased. Decisions were the provenance of the school board, the school board attorney, and the school district's administrative staff.

The gulf separating parents and citizens of the community from their schools was widened by the advent of federal aid and federal controls, court decisions affecting the schools, and the emergence of large labor unions. School boards were increasingly forced to focus on external forces rather than on citizen perceptions of wants and needs that affected their schools and communities. Even the once-powerful voice of the Parent-Teacher Association grew increasingly silent at the local level, directing its influence at national lobbying.

Small local citizen groups in many communities continue to voice objections to incompetent teachers and unfair administrators. Increasingly, they find themselves discounted and thwarted by a triad of protective administrators, remote school boards, and teacher unions. Too often, the only recourse is to veto millage and school construction bond issues at the polls. The November 1985 publication of the National Committee for Citizens in Education, *Network*, is devoted to "what parents can do about poor teaching." Assigning teachers to subjects for which they are not trained is "education's dirty little secret," according to Albert Shanker, executive head of the American Federation of Teachers. Another dirty little secret is that parents have increasingly found themselves powerless to make a difference and change the patterns that have emerged through the advent of monolithic school districts and iron-clad union contracts. A conclusion one can reach after reviewing the entire parent-oriented publication is that parents are searching for a voice without a community power-base.

The current role of citizens is to pay their taxes and hope for the best from the experts, or (if one has the means) find a private school that cares about the wants and needs of children, and parents' visions and perceptions of a quality education.

It was before these turbulent times of dramatic social change that Charles Stewart Mott, one of the founders of General Motors and a civic leader in Flint, teamed up with a young recreation director who had been struggling to gain access to the public school for evening, weekend, and summer recreational programs. It was an unlikely duo. Mott was known for his organizational genius as one of the developers of the new General Motors Corporation.

He was a businessman's businessman. Skilled in working with highly talented but diverse and temperamental engineers and visionaries, Mott helped put together the industrial giant, General Motors, following World War I. Many who knew him credit his ability to synergize the diverse personalities and talents of a group of automobile manufacturing pioneers with the very founding and success of General Motors.

Mott also had a reputation of prudence in financial matters that was the talk of the industry and his hometown of Flint. Personally frugal, he showed great generosity and patience when it came to organizational and community enterprise.

Mott's new partner, Frank J. Manley, was a young pragmatist who had the personality and drive of Knute Rockne. He was impatient—a "ready, fire, aim" man. The two men together created a force that was to change Flint from a mill town to an educational beacon that would gain national and international attention by the 1960s.

The meeting of Mott and Manley that would start a new era of community schools took place on a tennis court on Mott's estate (Applewood) in mid-town Flint. Mott inquired of Manley about the feasibility of building a boy's club for the children roaming the streets of depression-riddled Flint in 1935. Manley pointed to a schoolhouse that was not in session and countered with, "Why not use the clubs the city already owns?" A deal was struck, and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation funded a proposal to open five Flint schools for community use.

This was the first step toward what hundreds of thousands of visitors would travel to see 25 years later. By the mid 1950s Flint had become a postwar boom town. Population had more than doubled. Two new high schools and a host of elementary schools specifically designed for community use were built. Every school in the community was a community school. The scope of the efforts referred to as the "Mott Program" (a term that would become dysfunctional and eventually create misunderstandings) covered every conceivable human and social need.

The diversity of offerings was the result of the basic philosophical underpinning of the community school concept. Flint was an ethnic, cultural, and economic polyglot. The community schools that served the diverse neighborhoods were polymorphic—assuming various forms, styles and character based on the wants and needs of the communities they served. In the pre-Great Society days, Flint community schools had health screening, breakfast programs (served by the parents), health care, and special programs for all ranges of skills, talents, and individual needs for all age groups.

It was exciting, entrepreneurial, flexible, and open. Visitors to the system felt that they were guests of the community, and they truly were. Once they arrived in Flint, they were hosted to breakfast, lunch, and dinner by the Mott Foundation and the Flint Public Schools. At each of the meal functions, citizens, teachers, administrators, members of business and industry, and representatives from other public agencies gathered at the table to break bread and answer questions. Visitors were escorted through town by citizens, graduate students, principals, assistant superintendents, and school board members from morning until late evening. The schools shined like new pennies. The kids beamed. It was non-stop action that went so far (much to the dismay of some visitors) as roller skating in the gyms and midnight basketball leagues for the second-shift auto workers. The next morning visitors were greeted by sunrise singers—elementary children who came to school early to sing (no latchkey kids here!). The program was light years ahead of its time. In the schools serving breakfast, the parents took turns in the kitchen and even used the school's laundry facilities while making and serving meals. Ironically, with the advent of federal funds later on, the parents became redundant as paid help took their place, and the breakfast program lost its spark at the same time as it lost parent involvement.

To many visitors, the experience was unreal. Too much to comprehend. Some visitors could only see the parts—the health screening aspect, or the recreational program. Others keyed in on the adult and vocational education programs to the exclusion of the whole picture. Many missed the most important ingredient—the wellspring of community involvement that underpinned the entire enterprise.

Flint's headiest days came in the early 1960s. It had something to show the nation, and to some extent felt that it was immune to the negative social forces that were capturing center stage in other communities. This was democracy in action at the local level, combined with American know-how. Everything seemed possible. One illustration can be found in Flint's *Better Tomorrow for Urban Youth* (B.T.U.) program, which was initiated long before Title I funding and served as a model for federal intervention in the problems of urban youth from low-achievement neighborhoods. Federal guidelines and federal funds had not touched Flint as yet, and it was a rude awakening when Flint was informed in the late 1960s and 1970s by the courts and federal authorities that all its self-starting efforts were not enough. The "remedies" that were to follow took a lot of the spark out of Flint community participation. White flight to the suburbs hit the "lighted school community" with the same devastating results experienced by less innovative and forward-looking communities. The decaying downtowns of sister cities Saginaw and Pontiac might be

explained away by the inertia and indifference Frank Manley constantly battled. But why Flint too? The social forces that were to make a wasteland of urban education were at work, but Manley and Mott thrived on challenges and winning, and in the early 1960s, Flint was winning.

It was during the heyday of one success after another, one winning bond and millage victory after another, that the leadership team of Mott and Manley took on a new partner in Ernest O. Melby. Mott, Manley, and Melby together transformed Flint's community schools into an even broader concept—Flint's *community education concept*. When Melby joined the team, a new and broader definition of community school/community education was hatched.

Melby had joined the Michigan State University faculty after a full and distinguished career as dean of Northwestern University, president of the university system in Montana, and dean of the college of education at New York University. Refusing to be labeled a progressive educator or a reconstructionist (although he had strong professional and personal ties with many of the nation's foremost proponents of both schools of thought), Melby championed community education.

In 1955, Melby authored *Administering Community Education*. In the preface Melby offered the following observations:

> Within school systems, dissatisfaction on the part of teaching personnel is widespread and of long standing. This situation parallels the conditions in industry where management has increasingly found that a sense of personal worth and team spirit are essential to highest productivity. And the highly centralized internal controls of the past patterns of educational administration have not given the individual teacher a sense of his own worth or a feeling of being "on the team." Outside the school system in the larger community, worries about education have increased. Communication between school and community has broken down despite sincere and wholehearted efforts on both sides. The community has become so complex in structure and functioning and the school program so involved and professionalized that the older patterns of control and supervision have, in effect, broken down.[6]

Melby brought to Flint, Michigan, the conviction that human beings grow best in an atmosphere of security, affection, and freedom; it therefore followed that faith in people and a willingness to trust and set them free were the most essential personal qualities of educational leaders.

This faith in humankind and faith in freedom meshed philosophically with the thinking and actions of both Mott and Manley, and a new leadership ensemble was established—the three M's of community education: Mott, Manley and Melby.

One of the outgrowths of this newly created think tank in community education was the creation in 1963 of the Mott Interdisciplinary Leadership Program. Over 600 Mott Fellowships granting stipends of $6,000 for master's candidates, $7,000 for specialist candidates, and $8,000 for doctoral candidates were awarded to applicants from the 50 states and a host of foreign countries. With this one bold stroke, Flint's "lighted schoolhouse" model spread across the nation. Flint became a national laboratory for community education and, in a sense, the first "farm system" for developing educational leadership in community schools and community education.

Communities came to Flint to recruit community school practitioners. Louis J. Tasse was recruited by the Dade County (Miami) Public Schools to start a pilot community school program in 1961. The pilot community school in Miami served newly arrived Cuban refugees and was a heralded success. Fifty-nine other community schools were created over a period of 15 years in Dade County alone.

Other communities recruited Flint's community school pioneers: Al Koth went to Atlanta, Gene Weber to Tucson, Lou Petroski to Chattanooga. The 600 Mott Fellows (60 per year) fanned throughout the public schools and universities of the nation, convinced that community schools, underpinned by the community education philosophy, were an idea that could and would make a difference. This was not a common group. The sheer amount of the stipends ($6,000–$8,000 in the 1960s, which ranked among the highest in the nation in terms of both individual stipend and number of fellowships awarded annually) created an uncommon group of highly creative and enthusiastic educational leaders. But the verdict was still out: Could this cadre of community educators make a difference in America's schools?

The mid-1960s and early 1970s brought a series of victories for community education: the establishment of a national community education journal by publisher-philanthropists Richard and Shirley Pendell of Midland, Michigan; the founding of the National Community School Association (later to be renamed the National Community Education Association); and the production of a series of films about community education underwritten by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation.

Individual states, led by Michigan, Florida, and Utah, passed community education legislation to fund community schools. The Mott Foundation also funded a network of University Centers for Community Education in all parts of the country to provide leadership training and consultant services for community schools.

These events and others at the local, state, and national level created a vital, exciting, and creative climate that deserves to be recorded as one of the bright chapters in the history of America's schools. But despite all the success of the

community school/community education movement over the past five decades, serious limitations, misconceptions, and bureaucratic obstacles have repeatedly inhibited proponents of the concept.

The Lighted Schoolhouse Concept

When first used, the "lighted schoolhouse" phraseology was intended as a metaphor for a grander vision—one of using public facilities for community purposes. Lighting the schoolhouse was never intended to be an end unto itself, nor was it viewed by the pioneers of community education as a glorified night school.

Some saw real significance in moving school hours to the industrial model of both day and night shifts. The illumination revolution opened new vistas for some schools, but many school managers weren't paying attention. Today, most schools close at 3:30 P.M. or earlier.

As recently as the 1970s, the OPEC crisis and spiraling fuel costs threatened many community schools. One journalist inquiring into the severity of the oil crisis came to the conclusion that the lights would have to go out in all schools to save money and fuel. But when it was suggested that the lights might have to be turned off in Las Vegas before citizens reached the decision to darken the schools, the story was scratched.

The concept of the lighted schoolhouse was not the only phraseology that undermined the importance of the idea in its totality. Complex societies tend to be suspicious of philosophical ideas. Rather than see new forms, they tend to reduce ideas to pre-existing forms and perceptions. In Jack Minzey's words, they put new ideas in old boxes.

The Mott Program

The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation leadership in Flint was also misunderstood. From the very beginning, many observers of the vitality of the Flint experience walked away convinced that "we, too, could do this if we had a Mr. Mott." So the idea in the minds of many remains, "This is a good idea if we can find some philanthropist to back it." Send money! Even more trivializing was the notion that the concept was another layer on an educational cake. Find the extra funds (outside) for the new programs, and you can fly: no outside funds—no community education. The one promising result of this attitude was to create in community educators an entrepreneurial spirit years before the term received its new legitimacy and popularity in the public sector. As a result, the supporters of community education found themselves outside the mainstream of school funding, thrashing around for outside support.

The Funding Dilemma

Finding other Mr. Motts proved to be difficult. For survival, many community educators struggling to keep the concept alive became "grantsmen." Some community schools were opened with Model Cities funds. This required a structure based on model-city guidelines. The process proved shortlived when funding was cut, but it left an indelible mark in many communities. Community schools became, in the minds of some, plain old poverty programs.

Many community schools bounced from Title I funds to Adult Basic Education (ABE) funding, then to English as a Second Language (ESL) funds, changing their complexion with the available funding. The result was that the funding source (the state or federal bureaucracy) set the tone from the top down through its requests for proposals. Once this tone was set, the community members became people who were to be served.

Many community educators assumed the role of social providers. This notion that professional community education personnel were "providers" proved to be more than a trivialization of the original concept—it was a corruption of the basic tenet of freedom and faith in people to master their own destinies envisioned in the beginning. The clients (community members) became pawns in a dependency game in which providers and the schools formed an alliance never envisioned by early community education pioneers.

The search for a funding base other than Mott Foundation-sponsored "seed grants" went off in all directions. In some locales, cities (usually the recreation and parks departments) co-sponsored the opening of community schools with operational funding. This proved profitable for both groups, since schools had the available space, gyms, cafeterias, and athletic fields, and the recreation departments had the needed human resources and some funding. Opening a community's multi-million dollar high school with all its rich resources for as little as $10,000 a year was, and still is, a tremendous bargain for all community members.

But in many cases, bureaucratic turf conflicts resulted. The city or county co-sponsors were viewed as renters, and tacked-on recreation programs were the result. In several cases, school boards elected to terminate the co-sponsorships, closing the community school or finding other school-controlled funds to keep schools open. The reasons for ending co-sponsorships varied, but the problems usually boiled down to "who's in charge" concerns or interagency rivalry. The inability of some communities to cooperate, even in this most reasonable and simple manner, was a blow to community education advocates, who saw community interagency cooperation as second only to community involvement in reshaping America's schools.

Once keeping the school open physically at night took precedence over keeping the school open philosophically to community wants and needs, security dominated over freedom. The original community education proponents held that the democracy and the freedom of people to choose were paramount considerations. The school belonged to the people—local community control through the democratic process. It is not difficult to understand that this democratic notion is a threat to the "comfort space" of many administrators, who can only see a loss of personal and institutional power in a setting where the community is empowered.

The weight of the bureaucratic maze is not unique to the schooling establishment. It is epidemic at the federal level. The typical governmental response to a problem has been to add another agency or bureau to address it. Over the years, this approach has created a monster—an overgrown, haphazard structure that is in danger of collapsing. We need an alternative to the current piecemeal approach—a basic rethinking of the foundation of our governmental programs.

Those who have been serving in the field of community education for the past several decades face the same dilemma faced by the national administration. The add-on mentality is just as prevalent in education as it is in government. When something new surfaces, it usually is tacked on to what is already in existence. In other words, the change is usually in form and not in substance. Over the years, this approach has led to the creation of an unwieldy, uncoordinated schooling structure that is not always responsive to public needs.

If a new educational foundation were created, it might become possible to effectively confront difficult issues. Some outmoded approaches would have to be abandoned, and new strategies for effecting substantive change would have to be developed. In view of recent polls and the failure of so many bond referenda on behalf of education, it is apparent that the whole area of education needs to be studied and plans made for changes that will bring new confidence to those who support the educational institutions of this country.

For many years those who have supported the community education concept have been faced with the difficulty of convincing the general public and those responsible for the administration of schools that community education is not something that is simply added to the general school program. They believe that there are new dimensions necessary to accomplish the total education goal—the goal of giving people of all ages, not merely children and youth, educational opportunities in harmony with their hopes, abilities, and aspirations.

Until community education attained some prominence, there had been a tendency to assume that education and schooling were synonymous terms. Schools were created as separate community institutions, and they had an important part in contributing to the betterment of individuals within a community. Based on the schoolhouse or schoolyard concept of education, a series of programs and projects have been built on the narrow base of a *schoolhouse* foundation. All these additions have created an approach to schooling which is in danger of collapsing from its own weight, largely because of a lack of basic community foundational strength. Public frustration over the failure of schools to capitalize upon the opportunities that a community foundation presents have resulted in various kinds of retaliation against the schools. The frenzy created by California's Proposition 13 is one example. As a result of this frustration, there are some who would reduce the size and scope of schools and who would not approve any referendum that would add to or enhance existing facilities or programs.

In recent years, there have been many attempts to more effectively meet educational needs, particularly those of children and young adults. There are compensatory programs, special projects for the disadvantaged, programs for children with exceptionalities, and career education. In addition, vocational and adult education programs have been initiated. All of these developments are needed.

The difficulty has been that many school administrators, boards of education, and citizens in general have believed that these programs can be added without changing the educational perceptions of those who are responsible for initiating the programs. As a result, many of our school systems have become a patchwork of programs that have very little relationship to one another or to the community at large. In addition, many programs have been initiated without proper orientation for those who must administer the programs and assume responsibility for their success. In short, many innovations have resulted in failure; the general public has been disenchanted to the extent that it now demands a return to the basics, believing that gearing down, reductions, and cutbacks are the answer. This reactionary approach need not be the solution. The rebellion need not be against education. The more realistic approach is to begin thinking in terms of education rather than schooling. Implicit in this broader view is an examination of the erroneous assumption that all of the programs mentioned can be efficiently and effectively operated upon a *narrow* schoolhouse foundation.

Once the issue of the basic foundation is addressed, several questions have to be openly discussed and investigated: Has the American public lost faith in the power of education, or has it lost faith in schools as they are currently interpreting and implementing the educational process? Has the American

public lost its zeal for supporting education, or is it questioning the leadership and vision of the current school establishment? Has the public lost its compassion for the needs of all people or lost patience with self-centered bureaucracy? Has the public *dropped out* of the educational process, or has it been *closed out* by the school establishment? And finally, does the public sense and resent the fact that the schools have developed an independent, self-perpetuating bureaucracy that is rigid, discourages coordinated effort, and produces a patchwork of programs and tactics without a defensible strategy for total education?

Education is not alone in the need for basic stock-taking. Health programs, welfare programs, transportation systems, and economic development programs, to mention only a few, are conglomerations of programs and tactics that have very little relation to one another and are built upon assumptions and premises that need to be rethought. What is apparently missing in most of these programs is a broad strategy for effective change. There is no broad strategy for health in the United States, but rather a series of programs that attempt to respond to illness. The welfare programs do not have a strategy that ties in with economic development or education. These are only two illustrations of the totality of the problem.

Health problems cannot be addressed solely in hospitals. Transportation problems cannot be solved independently by the highway departments. Unemployment and economic problems have roots that reach into health, education, community development, and a host of other factors in a community's life. The same holds true for educational problems. Schools *alone* cannot make much of a difference in an individual's life or a community's progress. In essence, the vision of community education is based on the recognition that *it is the total community that educates.*

A host of authors have attempted to articulate the concept of community education, a concept that has passed through a rapid transition in a short period of time. It is a paradoxical concept in that, on one hand, it is eloquently simple, while on the other, it is the tip of an iceberg. As one idea is developed, others emerge. The acceptance of the community education philosophy is evidenced by its widespread adoption by local, state, and federal leaders. Acceptance of a new idea is sometimes a mixed blessing, however. Often in the very process of adoption, a new idea is distorted, narrowed down, or fitted haphazardly into a niche in the existing structure. In many cases, this has been the fate of community education.

The community school concept is at the base of the community education philosophy. Originally, the little red schoolhouse that held so many fond memories for Americans was essentially a community school. It was built, governed, and used by the community. It served a community purpose that was

educational, social, cultural, recreational, and personal. These schools reflected the value systems of the communities in which they were located. In fact, school ties with community were so close that in some cases, there were misuses of community control: attempts to impose religious beliefs, ethnic and social bias, and curricular constraints that were antithetical to the best interests of the total community. Such abuses often led to deliberate and successful attempts to break down community control of local schools by external forces.

With the industrialization of the country, broader influences began to affect the local schools. States assumed the burden for certification of the teaching and administrative personnel. Legislation that affected the curricular offerings of the schools was enacted. In some cases, state funding required additional changes in the local school organization. As a consequence, community control and community use of the schools began to decline.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the school that literally served as the community center for education, political, and social functions had almost disappeared. Recognizing this trend, a number of educational leaders began to recommend a return to the community school concept. The 1911 yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education appeared in two parts: "The City School as a Community Center" and "The Rural School as a Community Center." Despite such advocacy, the community education concept was not widely adopted during this period, and schools became more specialized and restricted in their role.

As early as 1930, schoolhouses had become so isolated from their communities that opening them up as community centers was seen as a radical innovation. Throughout the first part of the century there were those who made pleas for a return of schools to the people. Educational philosophers such as Dewey, Kilpatrick, and Counts saw the community as the true educator.

Elsa Clapp and Joseph Hart are often noted in community education circles as working to keep the community central to educational decision making during an era when school lights were going out. Hart wrote:

> The true educational agency is the community, within which and by means of which the individual comes to whatever maturity he reaches. By and large, the qualities of that community will be reflected in its members, variously, of course, as they have various capacities for responding to its impacts, and as they touch various facets of its existence. . . . The problem of education is the problem of community-making, in the most fundamental sense of the term. The problem of the school is merely a chapter in that more inclusive problem. School is important. But an unrelated school—a school that is unacquainted with, or indifferent to, the world within which it is attempting to operate, the work from which its

"pupils" come each morning and to which they must go back evenings—is an impertinence. A school that compels children to become "pupils" for some hours each day is in the long run an immoral institution. The vitalities of life are in communities, not in institutions![7]

Lessons Learned in the Mobilization of an Idea

By the mid-1960s, Flint had become the think tank for community education philosophies and practitioners. At least sixty graduate students were interning in Flint's community schools each year. Workshops, tours, and visiting delegations from other cities were a weekly occurrence. But Flint not only attracted attention, it paid attention, learning from its mistakes and the observations of guests and visiting dignitaries.

The outgrowth of all these activities concentrated in one locale taught students and teachers some important lessons. For example, the problems created by developing a separate community education program in the Flint schools was a mistake to be avoided at all costs as practitioners fanned out across the nation to open new community schools. The lesson learned was that fragmentation, or the establishment of a "shadow school," would not make much of a difference. Even with handsome funding, once an idea is entrapped in a bureau or subsystem, possibilities for significant restructuring or change vanish.

With the lessons learned by the mistakes of the name "lighted schoolhouse" and separate community education programs, new community advocates, mostly products of the Flint Leadership Fellowship Program, steadfastly insisted that community education be placed in the K-12 mainstream in public schools. In the case of universities, where training occurred, community education was to be part and parcel of existing teacher and administrator preparation programs.

The vision called for community involvement and partnership in the search for individual and community growth and development. And if it was an idea that would touch all segments of the community, one trap that needed to be avoided was labeling: be it recreation, adult education, a poverty program or a lighted schoolhouse. These separate programs were to be viewed as parts of the grand design, not the central concept.

Even more important, community education was a philosophical idea, not a reorganization plan for America's schools. Although the phrase "umbrella concept" was often used, there was no intent of putting schools under the bureaucratic control of a community education czar. No master chess game was envisioned. The idea of community participation seemed so naturally democratic and American it was hard to imagine that some educationalists would find it threatening, or at best, unnecessary.

Where Is Community Education Today?

How the community education concept came to various school districts in various bureaucratic niches differs throughout the nation. Community schools have wandered down a checkered path, searching for the heart of the decision-making process while continuously seeking a financial base. Some states and localities have done better by the concept's philosophical tenets than others.

Currently, one finds most community educators in departments of adult and community education at state and local levels. In many local districts, the community schools placed in the adult education division find themselves tending almost exclusively to providing adult education courses that produce state funding. Adult education is an important effort, but it is not all there is to the community education philosophy.

Once the idea is placed in a niche, its boundaries for growth have been predetermined. Shuffling the idea into a bureaucratic niche, whether deliberately or through bureaucratic mindlessness, has diminished the role of both practitioner and citizen philosophers.

The ideas underpinning community involvement/partnership have been given short shrift by the score of studies on educational excellence. Most of the reports are searching for a schoolhouse solution to America's educational problems. Even the new surge of private/public sector partnerships has a traditional school-bureaucracy base. The one element that is missing in public education is the public.

The community is the true educational institution. A schoolhouse alone, no matter how fully developed, cannot compare with the total community that surrounds it as a place for learning. To neglect this important consideration is to enter the twenty-first century wearing blinders that will impede this nation from achieving its potential.

Education is not solely a process for training individuals; rather, it is a process of creating and maintaining a total community. Only the unified effort of a total community—including interaction between home, family, schools, and all community agencies—can create a truly educated citizenry. An education is not a product obtained in a particular place or setting. Nor is it a program with a fixed beginning and end. Education, like life itself, is a journey—a process, not a destination. For life and for education to be a meaningful journey, the total environment must be considered. To understand frogs, you must understand their ponds and marshes. To understand people, you must deal with their ecology, too. In short, schools alone can't save and maintain a society. Only *education*—in its broadest sense—can accomplish this renewal.

A national public discussion of the critical issues in education is greatly needed. The American public has been badly informed, and in many cases misinformed, as to the role of schools in a total educational process. On the one hand, people expect too much of schools. Their rising expectations are accompanied by mounting criticism. Indeed, the signs are ominous. Increasing crime and vandalism, rejected bond and millage issues, the specter of financial and academic bankruptcy—all haunt many of our nation's school systems. On the other hand, the potential for mobilizing the community at the grass-roots level to combat the above problems is often overlooked.

Most problems confronting American schools are also confronting the cities and towns of the nation, since these problems are interdependent—caused by social factors that play on each other in a negative synergism, creating a downward spiral. These problems cannot be solved by any one single agency or institution. What is needed is a critical analysis of the problems and a total mobilization of all existing and proposed community agencies, institutions, and resources.

As America enters its third century, it faces an exciting challenge and opportunity. The scholastic structure of the country is in drastic need of self-renewal. One idea, a concept that has captured the imagination of Americans from all walks of life, is community education. It transforms schools into centers for community activity, expression, and celebration, making them community schools. Community schools serve all age groups at all times—morning, afternoon, evening, weekends, year-round—with much broader educational, social, recreational, and cultural means than presently offered in traditionally defined public schools. The cornerstone of existing community schools from coast to coast is the local citizenry, which helps determine the people's wants and needs, revitalizing the principle of participatory democracy.

Part 2

The Search for Educational Excellence

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The Search for Educational Excellence

The 1980s stand a fair chance of becoming a watershed period in the history of American education. Once again, the business community and the political establishment seem to have become aware of the critical importance of education to the success of the economy. In addition, several commission reports have provided critical appraisals of American schools. While all this emphasis on education is heartening to teachers and friends of education, a reading of these political statements and reports is not wholly reassuring. Almost without exception, the focus is on schools and the teachers. Remedies have to do with better teacher preparation and changes inside the school building itself.

Community educators know that schools alone cannot educate, that it takes a good community to engender a good education. The problems of American education are really the problems of American society as a whole. If only school changes are made as a result of the current burst of attention, bitter disappointments will follow.

American education has been forced to look at itself. And it is precisely this search that has revealed the tragedy of the unfulfilled hopes of the children of the poor, damaged by schools that were largely blind to all educational aims except cognition. The realization that *what* the child is, what he or she brings to school, plays a far greater role in the child's future than the school itself, and that a self-image is a more powerful factor in a child's learning than the teacher's methodology or the characteristics of the school, comes as a rude surprise to many school professionals and social engineers.

But teachers today, as never before, are becoming aware not only of the child's failure to learn, but also of the damage we do to the child in the process of trying to maintain compulsory learning.

Yet, just as the search for educational excellence can depress, it can also inspire and give new hope. The growth of the community school movement is perhaps the brightest light of the post-World War II period—an era that has cast much doubt on the potential and purpose of the schoolhouse. How is it that the community school movement, an essentially optimistic approach, has grown so widely and rapidly while drumbeats of pessimism and deschooling were plainly being heard? When almost each new day brought reminders of things schools were not doing and perhaps could not do, new community schools were being opened throughout America.

What series of events has given community education its impact against this backdrop of cynicism? The community school concept was the first widespread attempt to involve people of a community in not only their children's education, but their own as well. Community educators drew their faith from

the people—the parents—who, though disappointed and baffled, still believed that *everybody* can learn, and that if they do, there is real substance to American democracy.

There is no sign that community education is about to lose its drive for growth. On the contrary, new community schools are being established in every state. When you attend community school gatherings, you are impressed with the spirit of enthusiasm and optimism shown by the leadership. When you turn to the educational literature of the 1980s, however, optimism is harder to find. While the volumes of literature dealing with inequality in learning opportunities are extensive and have great variations in impact, their general tone is not hopeful. Most of the writers are schoolhouse-limited, assuming that the schools we have are the ones we will always have. Perhaps if American education is seen as frozen to a schoolhouse-schoolteacher base, the pessimism is justified.

A Society in Transition

Educational institutions are not alone in a sea of criticism and self-analysis. Interestingly enough, American business, industry, and other professions are in the throes of self-evaluation and public criticism. American business and industry have enjoyed over 50 years of unparalleled success. Despite the Great Depression and intermittent recessions, American economic predominance has been the envy of the world. Now, with the transformation from a national economy to a global one, symptoms of American economic stagnation and even decline are evidenced at every turn.

The blame for this reversal of form has been laid at the doorstep of:

- Government deficits.
- Costly government regulations.
- Inadequate or misguided capital formation.
- A decline in research and development expenditures.
- Short-term managerial goals.
- High-priced American labor, and of course, OPEC.

There are those who suggest that performance and productivity in the United States today are at an all-time low. The list of goods and products that once carried the "Made in U.S.A." label with pride in quality, durability, and cost are now more likely to be made in other parts of the world. And things are not getting better. Lester Thurow cites a conversation with the chief executive officer of Boeing while they traveled together on an American-made jetliner. The Boeing CEO told Thurow, "By 1990 there are going to be only three producers in this business—Airbus, Boeing and the Japanese." The point, of course, is that the Japanese aren't even in the business yet!

To view the economic transformation taking place in Japan and the resulting competition as isolated phenomena would be a mistake. Latin America and other nations in the so-called Third World are moving away from the export of raw materials as their sole economic base and into value-added goods, which are often labor-intensive ventures. Singapore, on the other hand, has set a course toward becoming almost exclusively a capital and information-intensive economy. The production of value-added products that require labor-intensity is relegated to the less economically developed Malaysian Peninsula where labor costs are low.

As John Naisbitt suggested in his bestseller, *Megatrends*,[1] "Things are not going to get better—they are going to get different." The world is caught up in a global economic transformation that parallels the reconceptualization of the economy in the 1860s. The transformation to the new economy will be as dramatic as the change from horses to horsepower. And today's transformations are often as difficult to comprehend as those of the past.

Adding to the confusion is the fact that traditional economic matrixes that created a dichotomy between goods and services do not work any more. The notion that goods produced are a credit to an economy and that services provided are a debt or drain on an economy no longer makes economic sense. The new automobile plants, for example, are no more related to Henry Ford's production line than the automobile was to the horse-drawn carriage.

It is widely accepted that Western society and the institutions that serve it and sustain its cultural and societal patterns are in a transformation that exceeds the transformation experienced in moving from an agricultural to an industrial society. Inaccurate perceptions of the long-term nature of new employment opportunities could result in expensive attempts to solve the wrong problems. The future depends greatly on the problems we decide to work on, and yet we often fail because we work on the wrong problems.

The Information-Age, Post-Industrial Phenomenon

Harlan Cleveland[2] calls our attention to the observation that in a remarkably short span of a decade, the once foresighted notion that industrial society was being transformed into a "post-industrial," "information" or "knowledge" society has become somewhat of a cliché.

Cleveland goes on to suggest that we have not gotten very far in conceptualizing the implications of an information society's impact on the way we live, work (or don't work), play, learn, and organize our lives. Although sophisticated hardware, with appropriate software, can come up with answers

in seconds (even nano-seconds) and communicate those findings around the world in minutes, the central issue still remains: Have we asked the right questions? For example, how does a post-industrial society that places high value on the effective use of information cope with the widening gap between those who are information-rich and those who are information-poor?

Part of the problem is coming to grips with basic terms such as the word "information." Cleveland, in addressing this issue, turns to T. S. Eliot's "The Rock":

> Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?
> Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?

In an attempt to clarify the question, Cleveland offers the following lexicon:

- *Information* is the ore—the sum total of all the facts and ideas that are available at a given moment in time.
- *Knowledge* is the result of refining the information ore through selecting and organizing useful information.
- *Wisdom* is integrated knowledge. It is knowledge woven into an integrated whole that becomes more than the sum of the parts (synergy—or the Gestalt).

If information is a resource, different in kind from other resources, it would be a mistake to continue to organize, conceptualize, manage, or use the new resource in the same frame of reference that dominated industrial age resources.

For analytical purposes, then, the contrast among the various dimensions that characterize the dominant resources for the two eras (industrial as opposed to post-industrial) can be seen as the transformation depicted in the following matrix:

Characteristics of Industrial Age Resources		Characteristics of Post-Industrial Age Resources
Scarce	↔	Expandable
Bulky	↔	Compressible
Less substitutable	↔	Highly substitutable
Less transportable	↔	Highly transportable
Containable	↔	Diffusive (information tends to leak)
Hoardable	↔	Shareable
Reductionist	↔	Expansionist
Non-renewable	↔	Renewable
Exchangeable	↔	Shareable and often free

In the midst of all these economic and social changes, the national debate on public schools, punctuated by a series of commission reports, is gaining momentum. Highlighting the problems of public schooling in the United States does not appear to be any more difficult than citing evidence of the decline and fall of productivity in America. Finding viable solutions and alternatives, however, appears to be as elusive for the schooling sector as it is for the economic sector. For example, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching calls the expansion of microcomputers into the classroom a flashy symbol of success. Again, information is one phenomenon, knowledge is something else. The Carnegie study suggests that the addition of computers into classrooms without basic structural changes will be no more effective in schools than the advent of quality circles in industry without dramatic organizational and management modifications.

Schools Bucking the Trends

The public schools of America have traditionally followed the organizational and managerial beliefs, principles, and organizational patterns of business and industry. Two basic principles of management have revolved around "scientific management" and "economies of scale." Underpinning these principles is an almost unquestioned acceptance of a hierarchical model for organizational efficiency. It is important to remember that bureaucracy is a man-made structure, and is no more a natural phenomenon than human sacrifice, chronic unemployment, or war.

Over the past 10 years, the Naisbitt Group has developed an assessment process following the basic restructuring of America. If the trends spotted by Naisbitt and his associates are valid (and many important growth companies and entrepreneurs seem to think they are), a restructuring and re-analysis of the way schools and many other public institutions are currently organized and functioning is needed.

The Naisbitt Group suggests that the United States and several other Western European and Asian countries are experiencing fundamental transitions. These transitions include certain movements:

- From an industrialized society to an information society
- From a centralized society to a decentralized society
- From a national economy to an integrated global economy
- From forced technology to high tech/high touch
- From either/or to multiple option
- From physics-oriented technology to biology-oriented technology
- From economies of size and scale to appropriate size and scale

- From a managerial society to an entrepreneurial society
- From hierarchies to networking
- From representative democracy to participatory democracy
- From short-term planning to long-term planning
- From the melting pot myth to a celebration of cultural diversity
- From material productivity to knowledge productivity
- From institutional help to self-help
- From vertical society to horizontal society
- From top-down society to bottom-up society[3]

With these trends (which can in no way be interpreted as prophecies) as a frame of reference, it is interesting to review the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the numerous national and state commissions advocating educational reform.

The most recent study by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching calls for significant changes in the American public high schools. They would begin with tightened curriculums, higher salaries, and better working conditions for teachers.

Edward B. Fiske of the *New York Times* calls the study ". . . in some ways the most prestigious of a recent series of national studies of American elementary and high schools, offering a somewhat more upbeat appraisal of American education than the others."[4]

The following are some of the recommendations that emerge from the million-dollar Carnegie study:

- A gradual increase in teachers' salaries of 25 percent, after making up for inflation, beginning with the base pay of new teachers.
- Relief for classroom teachers from lunchroom duty, paperwork, and other routine chores that contribute to "pervasive morale problems."
- Adoption of a "core curriculum" for all students, including those in vocational programs, that would include mastery of a foreign language.
- Mandatory community service for students as a requirement for graduation.

A salient finding of the Carnegie Report is the conclusion that *some schools in America are excellent*. Not all schools (or communities) are falling behind. It is interesting that excellent schools are not always found in communities with the highest per-pupil expenditure. Some schools in New Hampshire, Utah, Idaho, and Iowa are cases in point. To look at the statistical averages of failure in a nation as diverse as the United States, whether it be in unemployment, crime, impact of immigration, poverty levels, or school attainment, is to make the same mistake that the statistician who could not swim made in crossing a stream with an average depth of five feet.

In the most newsworthy of the reports, *A Nation at Risk*, the National Commission on Excellence in Education described the following educational dimensions of the risk:

- International comparisons of student achievement, completed a decade ago, reveal that on 19 academic tests American students were never first or second, and in comparison with other industrialized nations, were last seven times.
- Some 23 million American adults are functionally illiterate by the simplest measures of everyday reading, writing, and comprehension.
- About 13 percent of all 17-year-olds in the United States can be considered functionally illiterate. Functional illiteracy among minority youth may run as high as 40 percent.
- Average achievement of high-school students on most standardized tests is now lower than it was 26 years ago when Sputnik was launched.
- Many 17-year-olds do not possess the "higher order" intellectual skills we should expect of them. Nearly 40 percent cannot draw inferences from written materials; only one-fifth can write a persuasive essay; and only one-third can solve a mathematics problem requiring several steps.
- Between 1975 and 1980, remedial mathematics courses in public four-year colleges increased by 72 percent and now constitute one-quarter of all mathematics courses taught in those institutions.
- Business and military leaders complain that they are required to spend millions of dollars on costly remedial education and training programs in such basic skills as reading, writing, spelling, and computation.

What the National Studies Did Not or Could Not See

The National Commission on Excellence report contains admitted shortcomings. One problem is that just as different sections of the nation are experiencing the transformation from an industrial (labor-intensive) to a post-industrial (information- and capital-intensive) economy, we find the dropout rate and achievement scores, as measured by standardized scores, varying across the nation, depending on a host of factors, which include but are not limited to:

- population density
- economic factors
- language factors
- cultural factors
- immigration factors
- regional factors
- school size/district size
- racial and ethnic factors

In short, achievement scores vary as the intensity of the sociological and economic forces work in concert to create a positive or negative learning climate. A synergetic effect, either positive or negative, takes hold. Only a very extensive *multi-correlation* analysis could identify the key ingredients that influence the societal mix in different regions, states, and localities. The report is silent on these community issues. In fact, the Commission's silence on these economic and sociological factors highlights in a dramatic way the fundamental differences between the prevailing traditional school philosophy and the emerging community education philosophy. Community educators realize that the schools alone cannot preserve and maintain a society or a culture. Just as it will take more than simply lowering cholesterol levels to lower the incidence of heart disease, since heart disease is a factor of environment, heredity, stress, diet and substance abuse, so must a comprehensive, global approach to education be acknowledged.

What is needed is an "educational system" that is expansionistic enough to take into consideration societal and community variables. A total educational enterprise requires national, state, and local policies on economic opportunities, welfare, crime, immigration, and other educational and social affairs. These social forces can create "tides" that swamp a school.

In general, the various reports blow a long overdue whistle on problems that are becoming epidemic in public schools. The danger is that most of the recommendations revolve around the re-industrialization of the curriculum rather than the building of new philosophies and organizational patterns that are more in keeping with the transformation in society. For example, the schools are one of the last bastions of top-down management. Their low productivity—achievement—reflects the archaic processes of the past carried into the present by those who, plagued by a sense of insecurity, are afraid of the future.

The School Bureaucracy

No mention is made in the National Commission's report, the Carnegie report, or others of the layers of hierarchy and bureaucracy that violate every one of the principles of excellence forwarded by Peters and Waterman[5] from a study of America's best-run companies. No reference is made in any of the educational "search for excellence" reports regarding the huge educational bureaucracy that has created high school graduating classes of over 600 students. There is almost a tacit acceptance of large, industrial-model school systems that have made working in schools akin to working in the factories and mills

of the 1930s. This even extends to the emergence of an industrial phenomenon—a militant union movement that often protects incompetent teachers and urges slowdowns rather than striving for excellence and equality.

Peters and Waterman suggest the competitive decline of American business and industry is a result of overly rational management principles and practices. In short, measurement and analysis have taken the place of experimentation and action. Although rational analysis has its place, narrow rationality that takes the form of bureaucratic regulations and top-down planning negates the very source of inspiration, imagination, and innovation that makes an organization successful. The rise in the importance of accountants and attorneys in both industry and school business is only one illustration of the trend. The school attorney has become the eighth member on most seven-seat school boards, often exerting virtual veto power over creative ideas and visions.

Characteristics of Effective Organizations

Peters and Waterman conclude that there are eight practices that characterize excellent companies. Although they did not study public institutions, the lessons from their study are readily transferable to the schooling scene. They found that the excellent companies have the following characteristics:

- They act.
- They stay close to the customer (client).
- They encourage autonomy and entrepreneurship in the ranks.
- They believe in productivity through people rather than through organization charts and hierarchical directives.
- Their managers are hands-on leaders who shape and inculcate values.
- They stick to their knitting—they don't get involved in business they don't understand.
- They have simple and lean organizational structures.
- They have simultaneously loose and tight policies. They rigidly adhere to a few key values and principles, yet achieving organizational goals in innovative ways is encouraged and rewarded.

How would many American schools or school systems measure up in an evaluation based on these eight principles? Do they have a propensity to act? Hardly. The nature of the existing schooling institutions or hierarchies is to react—moving from one internal reorganization to another—grasping for innovations that are fragmented, costly, and fade away with little effect.

Action Orientation

It is important to note that the problems in American communities are not universal. Many communities are having excellent results with the current school model, for a variety of reasons:

- They are small in size.
- They are homogenous in population.
- They have a sustaining set of community norms, values, and principles.
- They have home-grown faculties and staffs that are often on a first-name basis with the school governing council (school board) and the chief school officer.

In these settings it is not the school that educates, but rather the community. These small centers of excellence or perceived excellence are becoming increasingly difficult to find. Perceived excellence is a concept worth briefly pursuing. If a community is happy with its youth, no federal or state policy is going to dent that community's sense of worth. Outside interference can result, and in some cases has resulted, in community alienation and withdrawal of local school support. The community's reaction is to blame the "outsiders." The "our school" concept is a difficult commitment to break. Witness a proposed school closing if you want a vivid example. It has a great deal of similarity to the closing of a plant or factory that serves as a community's economic focus.

As difficult as it is to quash, the sense of community that once served as the foundation for American schools has been allowed to erode, and in some cases has been deliberately pushed aside. This is true especially in metropolitan areas. The simplicity of the community described earlier, even when it incorporates "the other side of the tracks," is in marked contrast to the metropolitan area. The large metropolitan school districts are heterogeneous, fragmented, constantly changing. The social and economic patterns comprise a mosaic of often incompatible social, economic, ethnic, and cultural patterns. Each neighborhood has vastly different educational needs for and expectations of its school. Compounding this, there is often wide diversity within neighborhoods. For all these complex social and economic settings, there is but one school organizational pattern—a pattern that overlays the diversity and snuffs out any sense of community, with one superintendent reporting to a single school board. Local control in its truest sense has evaporated in the largest school districts, and in these settings one finds that excellence and creativity are suffering the most and contributing inordinately to the national statistics that place "the nation at risk."

None of the studies or commissions address such problems as:

- Large, unyielding, unwieldy, unresponsive school bureaucracies.
- Organizational patterns where administrators have numerical rank and grade. (Those with a rank of 45 are peers only with other 45s, and 48s talk only to other 48s.)
- Organizational attempts at decentralization that tend to delay action rather than facilitate progress and alternatives.

The Dysfunctions of Bigness

The gross national statistics make no mention that it is in the 50 or so largest school districts in America where schools are in the most jeopardy. The quest for large scale and size is an industrial-age concept. Size has always had its functions and dysfunctions. Lengthening the school day, adding requirements, and even paying teachers more (which they richly deserve) will not turn around an institution that is too big to respond to its community.

Florida's organizational pattern is a good case in point. A 1947 decision to create county-wide school districts has created inordinately large systems throughout the state. School systems are so large that many Florida school districts serve more constituents than do the senators of many western states; it takes more votes to be elected to some Florida school boards than to be elected to the U.S. Senate from Wyoming. Urban Florida no longer has local school boards, but rather local school legislators with vast constituencies and paid administrative staffs. Overlaying this pattern is a legislature that increasingly serves as a super-board, making most of the financial and curricula decisions affecting schooling. All in all, it is not a prescription for action. And Florida is not alone; the same situation is replayed throughout much of urban America.

Is it more than paradoxical that the New York Public Schools, once the beacon of American public schools (particularly for new arrivals), are today repeatedly cited as the nation's most troubled? Thirty-seven of the largest school districts in the nation call themselves the "Great City Schools." Some have referred to these large districts, with immense bureaucratic power over educational policy, as an educational cartel, especially when it comes to textbook adoption. Perhaps the Great City Schools should, under present conditions and results, rename themselves: the Big Government Schools!

They are big internally, big in lobbying the state and federal government. They are also big on rules and regulations. Floridians are more honest. The larger districts informally refer to themselves as the "Big Seven" of Florida's 67 school districts. There is no pretense of "greatest" here. But their power in the legislature is very real.

Of course, you could argue, What about the opposite extreme—the Cross Hollows and Empty Jugs of America? Are there districts too small for any chance of success? The question is not whether small is more beautiful than big. The issue is one of *appropriate size*. The desire among legislatures to become super school boards is compounding the problem of searching for appropriate size or for a sense of personal efficacy.

Personal efficacy is a feeling of importance on the part of those involved in an institution. Personal caring and sharing is often lost in large, top-heavy organizations. Chester E. Finn, Jr., warned back in 1984 that

> . . . the *sine qua non* of educational reform is that those with day-to-day responsibility for school management and staffing must possess the professional equivalent of what psychologists term a "sense of personal efficacy": the conviction that they can significantly affect the character of the institutions within which they work, *and that this is worth doing.*[6]

The concept of "personal efficacy" is also worth sharing not only with managers and staffers but also with teachers in the trenches and the public at large. It is difficult to imagine, much less implement, this time-proven concept of personal worth in the large bureaucratic structure that presently exists. To their credit, some small or smaller districts have made valiant attempts to serve the public rather than the bureaucracy. Part of the underlying reason for the ability to share the space and the action is a manageable size. Manageable size allows the decision makers to consider and incorporate human dimensions. There will be much more on the question of size and its relation to total public involvement in the search for restoring faith in public education forthcoming as chapters unfold. It is also important to note at this juncture that school or district size is not the only traumatic problem confronting the educational establishment.

If successful companies are, in fact, successful because they stay close to the client, today's school establishments have lost the vision. In many cases there is confusion as to who is the client. Who owns the schools? The administration? The board? The students? The teachers? Or the community?

What about advisory councils? The evidence suggests that they haven't been able to crack the bureaucracy either. All too often they become co-opted, serving as pseudo-administrative aides trained in procedures, forms, and regulation. At best, they enhance some trust between the administration and the school patrons. Seldom can they act, innovate, or create.

Teaching is an art. It is a creative act. It is an inspiring profession. An appreciation and application of this simple premise would revolutionize schooling. But it is difficult to be creative and artistic in a day that often begins with the equivalent of punching a time clock and reporting to a work station

to prepare youngsters for minimum performance evaluations that require more clerical skills than human relations skills. The fact that teacher unions are becoming the strongest unionized force in the nation is not due solely to paltry salaries.

In the public's search for a return to excellence, quality, and achievement, managers in both business and school settings have taken their share of the blame. Some of the criticism is justified. Some of it smacks of blaming the victim. Just as the distance between top management and the worker has grown, so has the gap between school officials and the faculty. Hard-headed rationality in the name of productivity or achievement has sapped the vitality of many American school administrations. Decisions are made on "hard" data, rules, numbers, and input quotas, rather than on the living elements of a community. The scientific management approach has several hallmarks:

- Big is better—the result is economy of scale.
- Unit cost is the overriding consideration resulting in increased fragmentation.
- All must go along once the hard target has been established. Creativity has no place once the unified goal or curriculum has been established.
- Everything must be controlled—job descriptions, complex matrix structures, policy statements, organizational charts, and relationships with the media.
- Incentives are given to the planners, organizers, data keepers, analyzers, and supervisors. It is no wonder that within the school setting, getting out of the classroom is seen as upward mobility. In fact, the further from the student, the higher the incentive.
- Inspect, control, direct, check, and prescribe becomes the order of the day.

Bad managers are increasingly spotlighted as the big reason for America's decline in both the private and public sector. But managers are not born bad. They are created by their organizational environment. How can one blame a superintendent responsible for 280 school sites for lack of interpersonal skills with the principals and teachers?

Those big systems grind up, use up, and spit out superintendents every four or five years and replace them with other upwardly mobile educators. The great ambition in this upward/mobile spiral is to be superintendent of the largest school system—for a city, or a nation. High numbers of students, faculty, and staff seem to provide some magic. There is no evidence that salary considerations are the motivator. The heads of the large school systems do not make that much more in comparison to school districts that have a more appropriate and manageable size.

Not only are the large systems under economic, social, and political stress, an emotional stress trickles down through the ranks. Favorite topics among large system principals and mid-managers include avoiding lawsuits, meeting report deadlines, counting years of seniority, and calculating options for retirement. These are not bad people. They are dedicated people who have been dragged down and burned out by the present system. They have learned not to rock the boat. "Go along" and "get along" are epidemic from the central office to the classroom.

Fortune magazine drove home this point when it editorialized, "The American public school system is the American version of Soviet agriculture, beyond help as currently organized because its incentive structure is all wrong."[7] The *Fortune* article concludes, "Given the political axiom that an intensely concerned minority (the establishment, in this case) will always prevail over a mildly intrigued majority (the citizens), the outlook for reform is ominous." If this premise is accepted, a more than mildly intrigued public is necessary for true reform toward excellence and equality.

Loss of Philosophical Values and Creative Inquiry

The future need not be so foreboding as the *Fortune* editors suggest. The community education philosophy could offer the needed vision for the future. In spite of its rapid acceptance by civic, business, and community leaders throughout the country, the democratic idea has been in constant danger of being lost, limited, or watered down by the existing school-bureaucracy model. The confusion that often surrounds the community education process stems in no small measure from the fact that it is not an add-on to the existing schooling paradigm. Community education is an educational philosophy and process that questions the existing assumptions regarding schooling and sets into place a new vision with different organizational patterns and new partners in the educational process. It is an educational process rather than a schooling structure. It is worthy of consideration, therefore, that community schools are treated as an add-on in many school districts and not even given a chance in others.

The philosophical roots of community education date back to ancient Greek notions about education and community. The ancient Greeks referred to the concept as *paideia*, a term that has no literal translation in the English language, but means, in effect, that a total community educates an individual and that for a student to receive a total education he must have access to the wide and diverse experiences of the community.

Western civilization tends to view education from a practical standpoint. Americans have prided themselves on the ability to move faster, higher, deeper, while at the same time giving increasingly greater attention to detail and specifics. With this trend toward the practical and the attitude that "we are doers," philosophical thought and inquiry have not been a top priority. But action without direction can be meaningless, even destructive. Therefore, the first obstacle that must be overcome to bring about an understanding of the community education philosophy is to address the apparent aversion to philosophical thought on the part of many successful and influential members of society. For too many, the term "philosophy" is a turn-off. Philosophy is viewed as a mental exercise that "bakes no bread," yet both individuals and societies develop their directions and establish their goals by asking philosophical questions. Philosophy is simply an inquiry into the most comprehensive principles of reality. But its results can be infinitely practical wisdom. Basically, philosophical thought begins with an analysis of existing patterns, a critique of the current state of affairs. This, in turn, is followed by constructive suggestions.

Philosophy searches for information on existing patterns through a critical analysis of those patterns. The knowledge gathered is followed by constructive suggestions for change. This is a never-ending community process, and in a democracy the actors are members of the community, the citizenry, the public—the sovereigns.

Community Education—A Philosophy for Change

Community education is such a philosophical process. It begins when individuals and groups analyze the current state of affairs in our society. The focal point in this analysis is the public schools. But since community education attempts to be a comprehensive philosophy, the analysis touches all institutions and aspects of community life that affect the educational attainment of people.

Even the most cursory examination of the public schools and the communities they serve yields the following conclusions:

- The public schools have not managed to keep abreast of the rapid changes that have engulfed society.
- The United States in general, and some states in particular, are experiencing a rapid trend toward high-density urbanization and suburbanization. It is in this setting of rapid change and resulting bigness that the public schools are experiencing their most intense problems and greatest failures.

- The public schools of America have not dealt effectively with the education of the poor and minorities.
- A missing sense of community has developed throughout much of urban-suburban America.
- Public institutions created to serve the educational, recreational, cultural, and social needs of citizens are becoming increasingly remote, bureaucratic, specialized, and fragmented.
- There is an increasing tendency on the part of citizens to accept current conditions: "You can't fight city hall."
- There is an increasing tendency for public schools to "teach" rather than "educate."

If these conclusions are at all accurate, the need for a community strategy to address these conditions is self-evident. A complete philosophy does not stop at being analytical and critical of the current state of affairs. It must come forward with constructive suggestions for change. The foundation of the community education process can be found in these constructive suggestions.

First, the community education philosophy advocates a return to openness on the part of all public institutions. Meaningful citizen involvement through all types of processes is the keystone to the community education concept. Citizens become partners with professionals in solving problems, setting goals, and establishing new directions for the future. All citizens of the community are granted a meaningful stake in the decision-making process.

Second, the community education philosophy advocates the full utilization of existing community resources, both human and fiscal, in addressing both the problems and the opportunities that come to each community. Full utilization of the school (around-the-clock for the full year) is an essential element of the community education concept. The fuller utilization of physical plants opens schools and other public institutions beyond what is now considered customary. But the concept goes further, advocating that schools can become recreational, cultural, health, and social services centers as well as educational centers. In turn, recreational centers can become educational, cultural, and social service centers. Educational programs can move into business and industrial centers. The culmination of the community education philosophy at its best is that all public and private buildings and the human resources of a community are mobilized and utilized to their fullest extent for the betterment of individual and community life.

Third, to accomplish the above, a great deal of intra- and inter-agency cooperation is necessary. The community education philosophy advocates cooperative procedures, especially on the part of publicly owned buildings and publicly supported programs. The result is increased effectiveness, immediate

delivery of programs, more accessible services, and a reduction in cost through the sharing of resources and the elimination of unnecessary duplication. The synergy that results from the mobilization of existing human and fiscal resources is a key element in the community education philosophy.

Finally, the community education philosophy calls for a restoration of the commitment of individuals and communities to striving toward their fullest potential. The citizen commitment toward self- and community-improvement that characterized the Golden Age of Greece was only achieved through a high level of individual commitment to community. For in the last analysis, it is the community that educates, not the schools alone.

The community education principles of openness, cooperation, mobilization of resources, and renewed commitment and responsibility on the part of both citizens and professionals at the local level is applicable to the entire educational enterprise. The education of adults is an important consideration, but the community education philosophy is not an idea reserved for selected populations or designated periods of the day. The concept calls upon all members of the community to engage in open and continuous self- and community-analysis. In addition, meaningful citizen criticism and constructive thought, along with suggestions for the development of both the individual and the community, are consistent with all known educational policy statements. No large sum of money is needed to implement the concept. In many instances, considerable savings and higher productivity from current expenditures are realized. The basic implementation of the concept merely requires an increased awareness on the part of the public, especially the media (the foremost educator in these times), to the opportunities the concept presents. An attitudinal change on the part of those accustomed to planning alone and working independently on high is also paramount.

Struggling for Public Awareness

There are literally thousands of illustrations throughout North America and the world where the application of the community education concept has made a dramatic difference. For specific local illustrations the reader is encouraged to contact his State Center for Community Education. Each state has at least one such center, as do most Canadian provinces.[8] The impact of the concept over the past 25 years, especially in small towns and rural areas, is one of the brightest chapters in American educational history. Successful projects such as the assimilation of immigrants (in Miami and Minneapolis, for example) attest to the efficacy of both the philosophy and the process. At this writing, 20 states have permissive community education legislation and/or funding provisions.[9]

In spite of these and numerous other success stories, when one reads the host of national and state reports all "searching for excellence" (and the media coverage of the reports), the community education philosophy remains one of America's best-kept secrets. The fault may rest on the shoulders of the thousands of dedicated individuals who call themselves "community educators." In the movement for educational reform, the community educator has been polite and conciliatory, trying to work through the existing system.

Opportunities for major educational reform come rarely—maybe once in a lifetime. One of the underpinnings of America's democracy is freedom of choice. In American schooling, the choices are currently public, private, or (an increasing attraction) at-home education. The concepts of community education deserve to be offered as a new educational platform that differs markedly from the existing conventional monolithic structure. The American public deserves such a free choice through an alternative public education platform. We may see the day when such a choice is offered to communities through referenda and propositions on local ballots. As an alternative to meaningful public choice and control of schools at the polls, some propose national "solutions" such as tax credits and tuition vouchers. These alternatives run the risk of destroying another of the underpinnings of American democracy—free and viable *public* education.

Part 3

What To Do About America's Schools?

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What To Do About America's Schools?

In its special issue, "What To Do About America's Schools," *Fortune* magazine's associate editor, Peter Drimelow, advocates strong support for tuition tax credits in Congress. He concludes that "without some such measure to stimulate competition, the next educational crisis will be on *Fortune's* cover about 2010."

Will local public school policymakers be complacent, defend the status quo, and continue their present practices? Or will they seize upon this renewed public interest and social analysis to execute meaningful change before dramatic changes from a coalition of interest groups erode the meaning of universal public education in the United States?

A Multiple-Options Society

When you look carefully at the myriad choices that economic and political freedom have brought to the American people, it is difficult to believe that the schooling establishment has blindly adhered to an either/or approach to schooling alternatives. For most, the only choice is between public and private schooling.

When you survey the social and economic scene, it is difficult to deny the fact that the western world has become increasingly a free-market, multiple-choice society. This is the reality even if you do not agree with many of the trends. There are multiple choices in the music we listen to, the art we create and collect, the phone networks we use, the mail we post, the ways we travel, the investments we make, the magazines we read, the TV programs we watch, and the vacations we take. There are alternative living and family styles, numerous child-rearing practices, choices in diets, and multiple exercise options. The multiple choices and the ease of access to these choices in America are the envy of the world.

In the past three decades, the consumer and public have witnessed a restructuring of America that includes:

- Major network television broadcasting giving way to narrow, specialized multiple channels devoted to news, sports, education, health, religion, business, and public affairs. (C-span deserves a five-star rating for informing the public on important issues.)
- Major radio broadcasting evolving into personalized, multiple-choice A.M. or F.M. broadcasting, with audience participation increasingly popular.

- General interest publications such as *Look*, *Life*, and *The Saturday Evening Post* making room for special interest journals designed to appeal to people in different age, economic, and lifestyle groups.
- Single-purpose institutions giving way to multiple-service centers.

If the 1950s were the golden age of the industrial society, the 1980s are characterized by a fundamental restructuring of the nation's social, economic, and political systems. Restructuring is the key term—since *structural* changes are dramatic changes. These do not simply involve tinkering and remodeling. Structural changes can even mean the disappearance of some forms and functions. Very few successful businesses or organizations (public or private) are operating today in the same mold as they did in the 1950s, and many that were prosperous and dynamic in 1950 are no longer around.

Schools out of Tempo with the Times

The one arena that has not sensed the movement from an either/or society to one of multiple options is the public schooling establishment. To begin with, the student is assigned to a teacher, usually for administrative or class-size convenience. When a child is assigned to an admittedly poor teacher, or one who is perceived to be inadequate (in essence it makes little difference), parents rebel, children become ill, classroom disruption occurs, and alienation sets in. With older students, the option is stay in or get out, and the nation's dropout rate reflects the prevailing mentality. With younger children, we test, label, and assign them to specialized programs and teachers who work with:

- the emotionally disturbed
- the severely emotionally disturbed
- those with specific learning disabilities (SLD)
- the socially and economically disadvantaged
- and the scandalous "varying exceptionalities" (a holding ground established for administrative convenience)

Parents who care and are in touch know the good teachers. Older students know the good teachers. But the system is currently based on the assumption that parents and students don't know what is good for them, or don't care. Increasingly, especially in the larger districts with centralized personnel offices and strong teacher organizations (which are more concerned with job security than excellence), negative perceptions on the part of the teaching establishment about the ability of parents and older students to judge the system have become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Schools are increasingly becoming closed, internally managed systems that push out a discouraged public.

The current organizational pattern in schools gives little attention to client choice or to the matching of perceived wants and needs to skills and strengths.

Meanwhile, other professionals such as physicians, lawyers, and engineers with specializations advertise their strengths in entrepreneurial settings without sacrificing professional ethics.

Teaching as an Art

Teaching is an art, and as in all the arts, creativity, performance, and talent are highly subject to individual and community perceptions. Recent studies investigating right-brain/left-brain dominance theories vividly illustrate the differences and diversity that enhance or retard mutual understanding, respect, and achievement among individuals and between individuals and groups. These individual diversities are the life-blood of creativity. A system that does not allow for divergent thoughts and talents can only be held together by rules, regulations, and force. Enforcing these rules and regulations becomes all-consuming in many school settings; keeping order becomes paramount.

It is important to note that the practice of medicine is also an art. Some physicians are more temperamentally and academically suited to treat certain populations and conditions. From the client's point of view, the search for a family or personal physician is an important and emotionally charged consideration. Only the very poor and the very sick are denied the privilege of finding their own doctor. Finding a doctor is a highly personal quest. Denial of choice in a society that values freedom is only the beginning of a rising sense of disenchantment.

A Closed Bureaucracy and Its Consequences

In the larger public school setting, not only are the incompetent teachers and administrators forced on the clients (students and parents), but also only the very, very incompetent are sacked. In larger districts, incompetent teachers are usually transferred to another school in another part of the district by the central personnel office. This pattern of avoiding action has all sorts of unintentional consequences. Parental confidence in the schools continues to decline, student frustrations and failures increase. All these factors are in themselves enough for concern, but what the current structure is doing to the competent, talented, bright, and dedicated teacher is an equally tragic consequence of monolithic, closed school systems. A system that does not recognize, encourage, and reward creativity, dedication, and excellence in its teachers cannot expect those qualities to emerge from its students.

The single most revealing commentary on current educational conditions is the fact that many public school teachers and administrators send their own children to private schools. A study of the number of public school teachers and school administrators who send their own children to private schools or

resort to pulling hidden bureaucratic strings to ensure their own children get a "fair shake" (competent teachers, that is) would in all likelihood be a national scandal.

Compounding the current blindness to the root causes of ineffectual education are a host of plans to reward competent teachers. Under the present system, those in the teaching profession know that current merit plans will degenerate into a reward for those who toe the establishment line. The good bureaucrats will get the rewards because the awards will be largely determined by those who control the existing system. To put it bluntly, the meek and accommodating will walk away with the prize. When this happens, public confidence and faculty morale will deteriorate even further. Those in charge will continue to manipulate the system to ensure their own survival. The faculty and the parents will continue to struggle against the centrally planned system. Unhappiness, as William James pointed out, is a function of the distance between aspirations and attainment. So is resentment, and the current merit plans are a prescription for resentment and internal rivalry.

Entrepreneurs in the Public Schools

Furthermore, the current large bureaucratic school system excludes the social entrepreneur. Opportunities to offer and persuade the public to seize educational alternatives are not part of current practice. Granting all the problems inherent in democracy, individuality, and community choice, an open system seems preferable to a system that gives the public what educational bureaucratic planners think the public needs. Some would suggest that there is no way to make the present educational structures responsive to consumer wishes except by reintroducing entrepreneurship and a marketing system that is responsive to community wants and needs. The community education philosophy holds that these creative alternatives and choices need not be solely in the realm of the private sector.

Public confidence in private corporations and public institutions is in no small measure correlated to the degree of social contact between the enterprise and the consumer. When social contact is open, responsive, and creative, a sentiment of community and warmth is created. "High-touch" or interpersonal relationships are difficult to foster in a climate of centralized planning. Bureaucrats in large remote organizations making master plans don't tend to generate public confidence. Confidence is fostered by hands-on relationships and social contacts that make the client feel important.

As the chorus of criticisms of schools has grown louder, interest in the voucher system has gained momentum. Proponents are searching for a means to ensure power of choice and a higher quality of schooling. Economist Milton

Friedman sees schools as they are now structured as an anachronism. He suggests that monopoly and uniformity have replaced competition and diversity. Friedman further suggests that control is in the hands of the producers (the school establishment) rather than the consumers (the community members that support public education).

In an interview with the editor of *Leading Edge*, John Coons warned that debate about vouchers has gone beyond the usual conservative-versus-liberal discourse.[1] For the first time, a majority of Americans favor a voucher system in education. Further, according to a recent Gallup poll, a plurality of parents with children in public schools now supports vouchers.

It would be of more than casual interest to analyze the above polled responses with the *size of the school district* held as the central or dependent variable. Have citizens lost control and given up on massively oversized school districts such as the one in Houston, Texas, which consists of 169 elementary schools, 70 secondary schools, and 190,000 students? The conventional wisdom of the industrial age was that big was better. The Dade County School system (Miami, Florida, and environs) has been in a head-to-head race for the last two decades with Houston as to who would be the fourth largest school district in the United States. An important question is, Would we get the same citizen response favoring vouchers if we took the time to poll or analyze the opinions of citizens in smaller school districts such as Boise, Idaho; Roseville, Minnesota; Anchorage, Alaska; and Charlotte County, Florida? These school districts typify the moderate-sized district. One central issue that needs to be explored, then, is the question of appropriate size for schooling efficiency, both at the district and individual school levels.

The Question of Appropriate Size

Our time is distinguished from the past in our view of size and scale. Daniel Bell* writes in *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*:

> Consider, first, the matter of numbers. It is startling to recall that when the Constitution which still guides American society was ratified, there were less than four million persons in the thirteen states of the Union. Of these, 750,000 were Negro slaves, outside society. It was a young population—the median age was only sixteen—and at that time fewer than 800,000 males had reached voting age. When George Washington was inaugurated as the first President of the United States, New York City, then the capital of the country, had a population of only 33,000.[2]

*Bell, Daniel. *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*. Copyright © 1973 by Daniel Bell. New York: Basic Books, 1973. Reprinted with permission.

At the time of our founding as a nation, few people lived in the cities. It was an agricultural world. "Urban centers" were places with 2,500 inhabitants or more. Most of the population lived in sparsely populated areas.[3] It was a first-wave, pre-industrial *Gemeinschaft* society. Peter Drucker* writes,

> How great the change has been, very few of us appreciate. It is hard for us even to imagine the reality of 1900. There was then, for instance, not a single university in the Western world with as many as 10,000 students; only three or four had student bodies of 5,000. The "large" university of those days was so small that its president or dean was expected to know every student by name and to be available for counsel on the individual's problems or on his choice of a career.
>
> The "giant" business of those days, the huge "trust" which gave our grandparents nightmares, was Mr. Rockefeller's Standard Oil Company. Every one of the eleven companies into which the Supreme Court split the "octopus" in 1911 is today larger than the original Standard Oil Company ever was—in capital, in employees, in production. Yet only four of them rank among the major American, let alone the major international, oil companies today.[4]

A change in scale is not simply that institutions and communities become larger. No biological organism or human institution that undergoes a change in size does so without changing its original form or shape. Galileo, more than 350 years ago, forwarded a "general principle of similitude":

> [Galileo] said that if we tried building ships, palaces, or temples of enormous size, yards, beams, and belts would cease to hold together, nor can Nature grow a tree nor construct an animal beyond a certain size while retaining the proportions and employing the materials which suffice in the case of smaller structure. The thing will fall to pieces of its own weight unless we . . . change the relative proportions.[5]

According to Bell, social institutions do not follow a fixed spatial law, but the concept and process of structural differentiation do apply to human institutions.

> The concept of structural differentiation, as derived from Durkheim and Max Weber, and elaborated by Talcott Parsons and his students, is probably the key sociological concept today in the analysis of crescive [increasing] social change. It points to the phenomenon that as institutions grow in size and in the functions they have to perform, specialized and distinct subsystems are created to deal with these functions. With the growth of specialized subsystems, one finds as well new, distinct problems of coordination, hierarchy, and social control.[6]

*Drucker, Peter F. *Concept of the Corporation*. Revised Edition copyright © 1972 by Peter F. Drucker. New York: John Day Company. Reprinted with permission.

The size of our institutions has grown, and may continue to grow inordinately larger and more specialized. In essence, large institutions have, or could become, the "cultural drift" of modern society. Cultural drift is a societal pattern that eventually overloads the circuits and breaks down. Institutions are evolving toward bigness with accompanying specialization and rigidity. Cultural drifts have marked the demise of other civilizations that pursued a cultural trend far beyond rationality. Living natural systems are in a constant state of renewal, reorganization, and restructuring, striving to maintain a dynamic equilibrium while in a state of change. However, man-made systems can achieve size far beyond the optimum. Many of the existing large school systems (note the delineation of school systems rather than educational systems) have followed the path toward structured differentiation (from the simple to the complex) and larger and larger size.

One consideration becomes obvious at this point for those interested in establishing an educational process more in tempo with a post-industrial society. Policymakers must address the question of size. A cursory analysis shows that large monolithic school systems run the risk of collapsing from their own dead weight. Size and scale in many school districts are increasingly becoming a problem. Although we continue to elect members to "school boards," in many large urban areas, they are not school boards at all. They are more accurately school legislatures, establishing policy and administrative procedures for 100 schools or more.

Many of today's large school districts were created during the heyday of school consolidation in the 1930s and '40s. Small school districts were consolidated into large unified districts or county units. The key notion behind the consolidation movement was economy of scale and the more comprehensive curriculum afforded by a larger student population. Many communities fought consolidation. They struggled to save their community schools and community identity. But for most, it was a losing battle in the day of class AAAA football, big school bands, and new athletic stadiums with lights.

The school consolidation movement was in tempo with the rest of the industrial age—the bigger, the better. America was building skyscrapers, big ships, large factories, and higher roller coasters. It was logical to strive for larger size, standardization, specialization, and centralization. And power flowed toward the center. It was a time of mass society—and the schools fell into step.

Experts and specialists from outside the community planned the reorganizations and consolidations. National experts from Tulsa came in to build big schools across the nation, and professionals from Iowa's Schools of Education were recruited to administer the new centralized school districts.

The rest is history. Population shifts, population growth, immigration, migration, and in some cases, court orders, have given America larger and larger school districts that blanket diverse communities and complex residential patterns.

The southeast coast of Florida (the Gold Coast) is a case in point. This strip is one of the most rapidly growing population centers in America. The southernmost county in this population corridor is Dade County. Dade County has over 27 separate and diverse communities and one unincorporated area. In 1947, the state legislature consolidated the state's schools into 67 county-school districts. In 1947, Dade County had 67 schools (53 white, 14 black), with a total school population of 47,000. By 1989 the district had grown to 260 school sites with a student population of 267,000.

Dade is not alone. With the Florida population slated to double by the year 2000, the impact of school district size will become even more dramatic. In Palm Beach County, which is currently twice as large in population as the state of Rhode Island, the school-age population is growing at a rate exceeding 2,000 students per year.

In the past, addressing the problem of size has simply been approached by decentralizing or breaking the institution into smaller and often fragmented parts. The assumption underlying this approach is that breaking a complex problem into simpler or smaller parts is a solution to size, scale, and complexity. If each of the smaller units would solve its part of the problem, all the solutions from the different parts could be assembled into a solution of the whole.

An interesting phenomenon is taking place. While school districts are growing larger—expanding—they are attempting to solve the problem of size and scale with reductionist thinking. Reductionist problem-solving attempts to solve large problems by breaking them into manageable pieces. Consequently, we find large school districts attempting to cope through the creation of area superintendents. The result is usually to increase the layers of hierarchy and bureaucracy, and to train the eyes of the area office on the central office rather than on the clientele. Teachers often find that they must go through several layers of decisionmakers for an answer. Compounding the problem, the area administrator is seldom allowed to deviate from the norms, standards, and procedures established at the central office. Another consequence is the distancing of the parents and the community from the central decisionmaker. Consequently, parents begin to feel that the only way they can be heard is through pressure groups.

Russell Ackoff gives a vivid illustration of the pitfalls that can result from reductionist problem-solving methods:

> Suppose we collect one each of every available type of automobile and then ask some expert automotive engineers to determine which of these cars has the best carburetor. When they have done so we note the result. Then we ask them to do the same for transmissions, fuel pumps, distributors, and so on through every part required to make an automobile. When this is completed we ask them to remove the parts noted and assemble them into an automobile, each of the parts of which would be the best available. They would not be able to do so because the parts would not *fit together*. Even if the parts could be assembled, in all likelihood they *would not work together well*.[7]

Simply reducing the size of existing school districts or breaking them into small units may in itself serve to provide some relief to the myriad of problems. But small is not the only factor. The real issue is appropriate and optimal size, scale, and form. All organizations—public and private—are parts of a larger purposeful system. Industrial civilization placed an extremely heavy emphasis on our ability to dismantle problems into their components; it rewarded us less often for the ability to put the pieces back together again. Most people are culturally more skilled as analysts than synthesists. This is one reason why our images of the future (and of ourselves in that future) are so fragmentary, haphazard, and wrong.

Rethinking and Restructuring America's Public Schools

To take the existing patterns and perceptions of schools and schooling and simply follow reductionist problem-solving patterns established in the industrial era will have little effect. Today, schools are modeled after a factory and reflect machine-age or industrial-age thinking. The curriculum is in large measure a series of discrete and disconnected parts, with many parts a throwback to pre-industrial thinking. They are atomistic rather than holistic. Today's schools are characterized by industrial-age thinking rather than post-industrial-age thinking. The existing school structure emphasizes:

- The teaching process rather than the learning process
- Rigidly scheduled units rather than quest for information
- A terminal process rather than continuing processes
- Rote memory rather than creativity
- One right answer rather than tolerance for ambiguity
- Molecular ideas rather than molar concepts
- Product rather than process

- Who is right rather than what is right
- Stability rather than innovation
- Standardization rather than flexibility
- Specialization rather than synthesization
- Specific information rather than appropriate content
- Bureaucratic accommodation rather than entrepreneurship
- Hierarchies rather than free flow of information
- Power over rather than power with

Even if post-industrial or information-age thinking were somehow miraculously introduced into the existing school structure, and it is desperately needed, we would still miss the essence of the post-industrial phenomenon. Even if schools introduced high-tech materials and offerings into the curriculum and became more cognizant of the nature of learning and the learner, one important element is still missing. Schools, alone, no matter how good or in tempo with the times, are only one aspect of a community's educational system. Again, it is the entire community that educates.

If the entire community system (both good and bad) constitutes the educational system, then a "paradigm shift" in thinking, planning, and problem solving needs to be realized.

A Paradigm Shift—A Useful Concept

The term "paradigm shift" has become a key concept in the discussions of futurists the past few years. Marilyn Ferguson, author of *The Aquarian Conspiracy,* shared the idea with delegates at the First Global Conference on the Future in Canada. She credits this idea to one of the most influential books of the 20th century, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* by Thomas Kuhn. Kuhn discusses what happens when new ideas challenge old ways of thinking. A paradigm is simply a framework for organizing perceptions that makes the world logical, rational, and consistent. But when more and more anomalies, inconsistencies, and breakdowns in existing paradigms are perceived, a new paradigm may develop. However, it may take years before individuals and institutions abandon dysfunctional paradigms.

Marilyn Ferguson uses Copernicus' ideas on the solar system as an example of an idea that radically changed our way of perceiving the world. The ancient paradigm (perception) of the world as flat and at the center of the universe was challenged by Copernicus. Copernicus' ideas called for a paradigm shift.

Other vivid illustrations of paradigm shifts in more recent times include major shifts in our perceptions on the role of women. One only has to recall individual- and community-held perceptions regarding women as recently as 1920 to sense the impact of new frameworks of ideas. The civil rights movement and the new paradigms on race in the past twenty years are another illustration of the power of new frames of reference.

In essence, community education calls for a paradigm shift in education. It is a call for an educational transformation: a new *educational system* rather than a *system of schools.*

Edmond Fuller, book reviewer for the *Wall Street Journal,* credits Marshall McLuhan with a vision of a "paradigm shift," although Fuller does not use the term.

> Principally he [Marshall McLuhan] made me realize a truth about television based on an analogy to the automobile. When the motor car was invented, people first called it a "horseless carriage," as if that defined and confined it. Not until it had outrun all the horses in the world and Pegasus together, caused much of the surface of the globe to be paved over with concrete or macadam, made us a neo-nomadic people and contributed to the start of the sexual revolution, did people realize that the automobile had not been a horseless carriage after all but a radical, irreversible alteration of the culture and environment.
>
> In the same way, McLuhan said, it was a mistake to think that television was just radio with pictures. Television, he asserted, also was a radical, irreversible alteration of the culture and environment, and therefore of the lives of those who were adults when it first appeared, but far more so for succeeding generations growing up with it.[8]

Once community leaders begin to think of the usefulness of the concept of paradigm shifts in analyzing problems, they will become increasingly aware of the fact that "we fail more often because we solve the wrong problems than because we get the wrong solution to the right problem."

What if we applied paradigm-shift thinking to the international problems of the Middle East, Central and Latin America, the nuclear race, or the problems of our cities? Paradigm shifts on the international level might include:

- An international venture to send men to Mars and beyond. It would take years to plan the departure. Once the spacecraft left Earth's orbit, it could result in years of détente while "our" men were in space.
- A religious community of tomorrow for the Holy Lands. A continuous religious world retreat that would transform the area into a peaceful sanctuary for the three world religions that cherish that land and its historical significance.

This global thinking may be a bit naive when we consider that we are apparently incapable of applying the lessons of transformation to local, more manageable problems. It is at the local level, though, that promise for significant paradigm shifts are the most feasible.

The value of rethinking the problems confronting American schools and searching for new ideas, conceptual schemes, and paradigms through community involvement and choice is the genius of community education.

Part 4

Government Schools or Public Schools?

Chapter Contents

Misconceptions
Openness
Bureaucratic Tinkering

Government Schools or Public Schools?

Even the best of the traditional *in-school*, academic programs have proven powerless against the negative outside pressures of family and community. Not only does the present scholastic structure lack the power to make a significant difference, but also it lacks the flexibility and vision to capitalize on the vast array of positive resources that exist in every community. But the power of the totally mobilized community is beginning to come into play. In many communities, citizen councils are beginning to mobilize their community's human and physical resources to improve their schools.

Community education is both an educational process and a community development process. Neither the opening of a community school nor the hiring of a community school coordinator is in itself a valid measure of the development of the community education concept. The genius of the concept lies in the involvement of all citizens, including school administration and faculty, in using the schoolhouse as *one* of many facilities to totally mobilize the community's existing resources to satisfy the educational, social, cultural, and health needs of its members. Once they are mobilized into a viable force for community betterment, these heretofore untapped resources can be marshalled for community/school/individual betterment.

A community school cannot become the embodiment of the community education concept by merely adding a few evening enrichment courses. Community education is a new form of education, and the community school is a revitalized form of an existing institution that promulgates the basic tenets of the community education philosophy. Those basic tenets are:

- Community education is a process, not a product. It is not a *new program*, but rather a *process* for achieving new programs.
- Community education is an educational form that mobilizes all community resources in the development of human potential.
- Community education posits new assumptions regarding the governance of public education and the role and degree of participation of the public in the local decision-making process.

Misconceptions

Many programs and services are offered under the broad definition of community education. But misconceptions arise when one part is seen as the whole. In the past, community education has been mistakenly identified as:

- an adult education program
- a recreation program
- the year-round school
- a series of enrichment courses
- a vocational-technical program
- alternative education
- a new marketing scheme (old wine in new bottles)

Former United States Congresswoman Patsy T. Mink speaks succinctly to the dangers of perceiving a part of the concept as the whole.

> Programs which we promote under the broad rubric of community education are often mistaken for the concept itself. How many times has community education been identified with programs of adult education held at the neighborhood schools, with vocational education programs also held at those schools, or with programs whose main thrust is merely keeping the schoolyard gates unlocked after school hours to let community citizens use the basketball courts? These are all part of community education, yet without the recognition that they are part of a larger whole, a larger concept, they are severely limited and are not instrumental in the creation, nurturing and fulfillment of the community spirit.[1]

The mistaken notion that community education is a separate program that begins after the regular K–12 program still persists. Many school administrators view the community school as a "shadow school," an attachment that is an add-on rather than an integral part of the total educational enterprise. The "two programs in one schoolhouse" approach distorts the fundamental concept.

The ultimate source of success with the community education/community school concept rightly rests in the hands of *local* school boards and the school superintendent in concert with the community. Without a district policy statement and commitment to innovation, creativity, and new forms, the idea will not long survive. The official administrative head of any individual community school must be the school's principal. The principal must accept responsibility for the expanded community participation that the concept demands if the enterprise is to have any chance for success.

The principal's role expands as a result of the school's new function as a community school; new roles are necessitated. One new role is that of the community school coordinator or assistant principal for community education. The coordinator, who at one time was called the community school director,* is a member of a new community team led by the school principal. Many cooperative arrangements have been developed among the school, various agencies, and community councils for the screening, coordination, selection, and in many cases, the shared funding of the position's salary. The community school coordinator is a *member* of the faculty with unique community coordination responsibilities; he or she is directly responsible to the school's principal.

In some rural communities the community school coordinator coordinates the community education activities in more than one school, plant, or community facility site and has worked out a satisfactory relationship with the principals of several schools. These cooperative models are in keeping with community education's stress on mobilization and cooperation, and are particularly suited for small rural communities.

As community education continues to spread to more and more school districts throughout the United States, the need to close the gap between basic philosophy and actual practice will increase. Community education authority Jack Minzey writes:

> There is a vast difference between the philosophical claims of community education and the actual programs which are in operation. More specifically, much of what is called community education is, in reality, adult education or recreation, and as such, is neither unique nor capable of accomplishing all that community educators claim can be accomplished by means of the community education concept.[2]

What has developed in many community schools, unfortunately, is the adding on of an evening program with no change in the program for children during the day and no widespread involvement of the people in educational policy development. The total resources of the community, namely people, are not being used to any considerable degree. Until they are involved, we do not have true community education.

The original concept that visualized health, education, and human welfare as integral and complementary components is still philosophically sound. Pursuing synergy in community problem solving pays great dividends. School architects are now beginning to develop "human resource centers" instead of

* The term "community school director" may have contributed to the mistaken notion that the principal headed the day program and the director headed the optional community education program. In some urban areas, the title of assistant principal for community education is used.

traditional schoolhouses. This rethinking of facility construction should be supported for human, financial, and political reasons. The waste that results from petty agency rivalry and unnecessary duplication can no longer be afforded or tolerated. The needs of local communities and the people who live there deserve high priority.

The community school, a school that belongs to all the people of the community, is a concept that has been promoted, praised, and supported for years. How is the concept faring in one of today's larger districts? Take a look at Darrin's Cove.

Darrin's Cove is a beautiful residential community of approximately 75,000 people. It has two high schools, two middle schools, and five elementary schools. Eight of its nine public schools have become community schools.

The creation of community schools in Darrin's Cove was a sterling example of cooperation on the part of the city government, the public school system, business and industry, and local citizens. The initial community school in Darrin's Cove was opened in the late 1960s with a small incentive grant from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation through the nearby University Center for Community Education, and cooperative funding was provided by the City of Darrin's Cove. Thus, Darrin's Cove became one of the first communities in the state to adopt the community school philosophy. The concept caught on and a second school was opened; six others eventually followed.

The city's commitment has been extensive. On one 20-acre school site, the city has invested over $175,000 in recreational capital improvements. Darrin's Cove had three community schools before the state passed a Community Education Act that partially funds the community school coordinator's salary.

The success of community education in Darrin's Cove has been possible only because of a high level of commitment from many people from all walks of life. One citizen in Darrin's Cove has been especially dynamic in promoting the community education concept: Maggie Rex, wife of a successful industrialist. Known to people throughout the city as "Mrs. Community Education," she has been a central figure in the development of community education throughout the city, county, and state.

Darrin's Cove is not a newcomer to the community education concept. City street signs direct citizens to all of Darrin Cove's community schools. It is on the verge of becoming a community where all the schools are community schools. This, in itself, is unique. But something happened on a Friday night that shook the optimism and some of the zeal out of Maggie Rex. This is how the story unfolds.

It was a Friday evening, the last day of school. At 5:30, Laura Blum, one of Maggie's friends, called and said, "Maggie, I need some advice."

Laura Blum is a widow. She has reared two children since her husband's death in an industrial accident. The older boy is an honor student in college, and the younger daughter, Stephanie, is a freshman at the local high school. Laura apologized for bothering Maggie on a Friday evening regarding a school matter, but she knew of Maggie's involvement with schools and felt that Maggie might give her some help.

Laura's daughter, Stephanie, was informed on the previous Wednesday by fellow students that she had won an award at an "invitation-only" awards assembly. Stephanie first learned that she was to be recognized as an honor student by way of friends—the day after the assembly. Her friends also informed her that she would have to see Mr. Conti, the assistant principal, before the last day of school if she wanted her award. Word was out that if students didn't pick up their awards by Friday, the awards would be thrown away.

With final exams and a schedule at odds with Mr. Conti's, Stephanie could not get in to see him. All visits to his office got the same response: "He's very busy with the closing of school." Mrs. Blum started calling the school from her business phone, but Mr. Conti was not available. Laura Blum did not leave her office number since she could not always be at her desk, but she explained the situation to two school clerks. In both cases, she was referred to other individuals, but the persons to whom she spoke couldn't help. She would have to talk to Mr. Conti. But Mr. Conti was never in.

There was one additional complication: Stephanie was to be on an airplane the following Sunday morning to visit her grandmother for part of the summer. Laura wanted to reassure Stephanie that her award would not be thrown away.

Maggie is a community educator. She did not see Laura's problem as an overwhelming one. In fact, she was almost positive that because her community has community school coordinators—educators who pride themselves on being responsive—she could make one call and get a response that would satisfy the Blums. All she would have to do was contact the community school office, pass on the problem, and the "process" would go to work for a concerned community member. It would be that simple.

She momentarily thought of telling Laura to simply call the community school office, but on second thought, Maggie decided against that approach. Laura had already been referred and re-referred. Maggie remembered that we are all community educators—professionals and citizens alike. And, somewhere in her readings on community education, she had learned that a true community educator does not refer people into the bureaucratic maze. She would see to it that an appropriate person would contact Laura—not necessarily with an answer to the problem, but at least with accurate information and a plan for solving it.

Laura did not want an immediate solution. She didn't want the award right there and then. Laura simply wanted to allay Stephanie's anxiety. In so doing, she would also save her own weekend. Laura knew that there was also the possibility that Stephanie or her friends had the thing all blown out of proportion. So Maggie told Laura that she would be hearing from the school before Stephanie left on Sunday morning. Maggie was pleased that she lived in a community that had a "problem-solving process." All she had to do was plug Laura's concerns into the community school coordinator's office at the high school, and something constructive would happen.

Following her talk with Laura, Maggie turned to the phone book. She was a bit perplexed at the difficult time she had finding the number of the high school. It wasn't listed under "Darrin's Cove High School." Undoubtedly, it would be under "Darrin's Cove Community High School." Wrong again. After exhausting other sources of information with no success, Maggie finally found the telephone number for Darrin's Cove High School in the yellow pages under "Schools." The fact that there was no separate number for a community school office did not discourage her one bit. That was, in fact, in keeping with the total community school concept. She understood that the community school is not an appendage to the regular school. So one school number made good sense to Maggie.

It was approximately 6 P.M. when Maggie dialed the community high school. There was no answer. She tried again and received no answer. Could it be that "our" community school would be closed on Friday evening? She tried the middle school. A janitor answered, "The community school is closed on Friday night." The custodian further stated that he could not give out the community education coordinator's home phone number. Maggie next tried two elementary community schools and again received no answer.

Maggie became somewhat perplexed. She had taken the speaker's platform over and over again, advocating community schools, raising funds, spurring people on to the idea of keeping schools open for community use. Maggie Rex, however, had not become Mrs. Community Education by being timid or lacking in persistence. She knew every community school assistant principal in town by name; if need be, she would call the assistant principal direct. She also had the private number of the high school principal, but that had been given to her for social purposes by the principal's wife. She made up her mind not to call the high school principal at home on Friday evening, even as a last resort.

She began thumbing through the phone book and dialing directory assistance for help. A sociological phenomenon hit her with shrill impact. She knew that the principal of the high school had an unlisted number. But now she

began to find that all assistant principals for community schools also had unlisted numbers. Maggie had grown up in a time and community where all the school administrators not only had listed numbers, but viewed occasional evening calls as part of their administrative responsibility. Had all this changed?

Finally she hit pay dirt—one of the elementary community school coordinators had a listed number! She called Ed Dell, an enthusiastic coordinator of one of the Darrin's Cove elementary schools. Ed was surprised to hear from Maggie and seemed to be a bit embarrassed to have her find him at home on Friday evening. Maggie was tempted to unload her feelings on Eddie, but she held back. She simply needed the home phone number of Mel Williams, the community high school coordinator. She explained that there was an *urgent* problem, thanked Ed for Mel's phone number, and hung up.

Maggie began to reflect on the urgency of the problem. Was it really urgent? Not really, since it was a rather simple problem in the first place. But she felt slightly frantic simply because of the frustrations she had experienced. The closed, unresponsive system had a way of turning a small, immediately resolvable problem into a situation that taxed one's patience. Maggie was becoming impatient and disenchanted with a system that closed itself off from the people it was established to serve.

She called Mel Williams at home. Mel was not there. His wife said that he was at the school but would be home momentarily. Maggie asked for Mel's number at the school, thinking it was possible that there was another number that rang into Mel's office. She also asked Mrs. Williams to have Mel call her in the event she missed him at school. Maggie again called the school. Again, there was no answer.

In about 15 minutes, Mel Williams called Maggie from his home. Maggie had had time to rethink the problem during the respite, and now very calmly shared the problem with Mel Williams. She started by giving Mel a bit of community education inspirational talk, saying, "Mel, I have a community problem that I think you might be able to help me with."

Maggie then shared the problem of Stephanie Blum. Maggie asked if there was any way that Mel might contact Mr. Conti during the evening or the next day so that they could get or save Stephanie's award. Maggie was about to give Mel Laura Blum's phone number and move on to other things. She was sure he would call Mrs. Blum to tell her that it would be possible to get the award before Sunday morning, or at the very least, assure Laura and Stephanie that the award would not be destroyed.

Maggie wasn't ready for Mel's reaction and reply. First, Mel was a bit bewildered. He couldn't quite understand why Maggie was calling him. He said, "Maggie, that is an academic problem, and that's Mr. Conti's area." Had Maggie met the same stone wall that Laura had experienced? She persisted. "Mel, can you work this out with Mr. Conti, possibly find out where the award is stored, and pull it for Stephanie?" Mel was even more bewildered. His tone of voice implied that Maggie didn't understand "how schools operate." She didn't seem to realize that one doesn't step on another person's turf or invade his office. Mel explained that he could not do that but would be willing to give Maggie Mr. Conti's home number. Maggie was back to being frustrated. They were not even on the same frequency. Mel Williams had learned his lesson well: Risk takers are an endangered species. Giving Maggie an unlisted number was as far as he dared to go.

With that, Maggie put the receiver down in semi-defeat. Her community schools were not responsive; they were not open. Had they become simple appendages of an increasingly rigid school bureaucracy? The only thing she had accomplished up to this point was to get an unlisted number of another assistant principal—a number unavailable to most people. The same old aloof stance that characterized most public institutions was now coming from the key representative of a community school. In fact, Maggie felt that she had been dealing with "government schools," not "public schools," and that the government had closed down for the weekend.

Maggie reflected upon the situation and concluded that she might be wrong. Every institution has its way of solving problems. Mel had given her Mr. Conti's private phone number, and if that's the way the system operates, she decided to go along with the system. She called Mr. Conti. But she was still troubled. All she had been able to do up to this point was cut a little red tape. She had thought that the community school philosophy provided an avenue for all people, not just the few who could get an unlisted phone number.

Calling Mr. Conti was a mistake in one sense and an eye opener in another. Maggie's suggestion that he could simply solve the problem immediately was completely foreign to Mr. Conti. The fact that a student was concerned about not being present to receive an award, and more importantly, the thought that the student held the award in high esteem, was incomprehensible to Mr. Conti.

It was apparent that Mr. Conti was disgusted with the misinformation that he was now confronting. He explained that the award could be picked up next year, and that it was never his policy to destroy awards. He also stated that there were some awards that had been collecting dust in his office for over three years because the winners didn't care enough to stop by and collect them.

He was surprised that Stephanie had not heard about the awards assembly, since an effort had been made to contact all winners. Maggie felt helpless and frustrated. In complete resignation, she called and informed Laura Blum that Stephanie's award would not be destroyed and that it could be picked up next week.

This incident has many implications. It would be easy to place the blame on certain individuals, and it would be just as easy to refute that blame. There are several questions to be considered:

- Why didn't Mrs. Blum persist during the regular school day to contact Mr. Conti?
- Why didn't Stephanie cope with the problem during the regular school day?
- Why didn't Mr. Williams, the community school coordinator, assume responsibility?
- Why are the community schools closed on Friday night?
- Why did Maggie Rex go to such extreme lengths for a simple ninth-grade award?

And, of course, there are many other questions. But placing the blame on individuals is not the purpose of this case history. Placing blame will not solve even the minor problems that have unfolded. The purpose of this illustration is to call attention to a pattern that is developing in society. A resolution to what happened in Darrin's Cove on that Friday evening will not be found simply in getting the award for Stephanie, nor will it be found in "shaping up" any of the actors in this scenario, or in more imaginative cutting of red tape. As long as we search for a terminal decision and *one* right answer, the real problems will continue to elude us. A solution lies in thinking beyond the problem: *What* is wrong is at issue, not *who* is wrong.

A strong case might be built against the school administration. Some would suggest that there was insensitivity on the part of Mr. Conti, the assistant principal for curriculum. And some of it might be justified. But the realization that the problem is not Mr. Conti's alone persists. Can Mr. Conti be blamed for jealously guarding his weekends for himself and his family? Of course not. Can he be faulted for having an unlisted phone number? At one time he most surely had a listed number as a school administrator. But society has changed. In an age of terrorism, obscene phone calls, cranks, and psychopathic behavior, can he be faulted for seeking privacy? Again, the answer is no. Should he be criticized for not dropping everything and returning to the school to solve one small problem after a day of dealing with hundreds of similar problems?

Mr. Conti and his peers all across the nation cannot be expected to be everywhere and be everything to all the people with whom they come in contact. In fact, his resentment of the invasion of privacy that Friday evening can be easily understood.

No, we cannot blame Mr. Conti for his reactions that evening. He was figuratively throwing up his hands in despair. If any fault can be laid at Mr. Conti's doorstep, all of his peers in school administration must share equally in the blame. And that blame does not rest with their unwillingness to be on duty 18 or 20 hours a day, including part of the weekend. It lies in the administration's seeming inability to cope with emerging problems. What we find here, more realistically, is an illustration of avoidance behavior. School administrators do not start unlisting their phone numbers because of a few evening calls. Unlisting their numbers is a response to an overwhelming deluge of calls, complaints, and disturbances. In one respect, it is a reaction to a public whose problems do not end at two-thirty or three o'clock. A community's dynamics spill into the private life of many school administrators, just as school problems spread into community and family life. Mr. Conti and his colleagues in administration have known this for a long time, and they can attest to the fact that community problems always find their way into the schools.

Does this suggest that a listed phone number identifies a responsive school administrator? The answer again is no. Times have changed, and returning to previous role models is neither possible nor realistic in many situations. The solution lies somewhere in the creative genius of man to overcome obstacles and problems, not to avoid them. While the administrative heads of our schools were unlisting their numbers, the public could, realistically, expect the development of creative avenues to fill the void created by that action.

What are some of the courses of action one could expect? One suggestion that comes to mind is the total integration of the entire school staff, including the community school and support staff, into a total educational unit. The unit would provide information, answer questions, furnish guidance and counseling services, develop problem-solving approaches, and handle discipline and attendance problems. An entire array of school successes and problems transcends the "three-o'clock barrier." An administrative team that is available when people have needs could be mobilized. Communication with the community would be emphasized. This would entail sharing some of the power and authority with those who traditionally staff schools during afternoon, evening, and weekend hours. Not all of the sharing would be among school employees. There is a host of other agencies that serve community needs. A network of agencies that respond to individual and group requests could be

established. The school could serve as *one* communication link in the community network. Phone numbers and office hours could be widely publicized and easily accessible.

The public does not demand immediate answers. They simply want "due process." They want to be taken seriously. They want access. They received it from their schools in the past in a rather informal manner, by calling a teacher or a principal at home. The informal, intimate approach may no longer be possible in a highly urbanized, bureaucratic society. But the administrator cannot walk away from the problem. Open, creative, inexpensive, and cooperative approaches must be developed if the alienation and open rebellion against the school is to be turned into a positive supporting attitude. No citizen with even the most insignificant concern or question should be subjected to a bureaucratic run-around, or (even worse) a closed, unresponsive, unavailable institution. The public's expectation of a responsive school system is anything but an unreasonable desire; without the public's philosophical and financial support, the entire schooling enterprise tumbles to the ground.

If you analyze the behavior of Mel Williams, the community education coordinator, you could very easily fall into the trap of questioning his dedication or commitment. But Mel, too, is a victim of a system. The community schools in Darrin's Cove are under the supervision of the county district's central office staff. The community schools have developed to a large extent as an add-on to the "regular" day's program. Mel's role has evolved into that of a specialist for afternoon and evening adult and recreation programs. A majority of the classes produce full-time equivalencies (F.T.E.)—a formula for receiving state aid for students. Some of the courses are not eligible for state aid and are conducted on a self-generating basis, with student fees covering instructional costs. A number of elements have kept Darrin's Cove Community High School from becoming a viable community school:

- Communication between the day staff and the evening staff is minimal.
- The community school's coordinator plays a minor role in the school citizen's advisory council decision-making process.
- The citizen's advisory council has been given a limited role and scope.
- Coordination with other community agencies is minimal.
- Community requests for school services are generally limited to fixed programs, such as evening classes and formal recreation programs that emphasize the running up of F.T.E.'s (head counts for state funding).
- A process for community involvement in individual and community problem solving is missing. The school administration is in charge, make no mistake about that!

In essence, Darrin's Cove has developed, at best, a creative, non-traditional adult education program. The educational and recreational programs are to some degree highly structured and formalized. The programs are very successful four evenings a week, and the parking lots at all Darrin's Cove community schools are full on Monday through Thursday evenings. But the closed school offices and empty parking lots on Friday evening point to some deep-seated voids in the community schools of Darrin's Cove, voids that go deeper than the fact that a citizen could not contact a community school coordinator one Friday night.

Is the community school simply a place that offers a series of evening adult activities that take the form of classes? If that is the case, offering courses and activities four evenings a week, Monday through Thursday, does not violate the community school concept too badly. In fact, one could make a case that people won't come out for self-improvement classes of any kind on Friday nights. However, the advocates of the community education philosophy have told decisionmakers and the public that *community education is much more than a series of courses*. Community education has captured the imagination of the voting public, not as a series of programs (no matter how necessary), but as a process. It has been promoted as a process that envisions:

- Community involvement in the public school;
- A means for maintaining and developing a sense of community;
- A strategy for mobilizing community resources;
- A means of returning openness and responsiveness to public institutions; and
- A base for local participation in solving community problems such as:
  - loneliness
  - juvenile delinquency
  - separation of age groups, economic groups, and racial and ethnic groups
  - drop-outs
  - teenage pregnancies
  - teenage alienation
  - drug abuse
  - vandalism
  - under-utilization of publicly owned resources

The list is endless and varies from community to community.

The advocates of community education have convinced the Congress and many state legislatures that through a process that establishes a new sense of affiliation on the part of the public, accompanied by a new emphasis on the wants and needs of all members of the community, a new era of education

could emerge in each and every community. Underpinning the entire concept is a belief that this will only be possible if citizens again experience a greater sense of control over their own destiny.

There are those who have said, "It sounds great in theory, but it won't work." The commitment level for such a strategy, they argue, is too great for it to be realistic. But the Maggie Rexes of America have refused to accept this pessimistic view. They have a high faith in people as individuals and groups. Their optimism is historically supported. And even if they are wrong, the consequences of losing public education are too disastrous to contemplate. Now, however, Maggie finds that even community school coordinators, individuals who are selected, trained, and employed to implement and develop the concept, have been co-opted into the structured, bureaucratic maze. Faulting Mel Williams and the other community school coordinators and their supervisors for lack of commitment and dedication fails to get at the root of the problem. It is not an individual's lack of commitment, but rather a societal, organizational trend that engulfs the individual, with serious consequences for society.

The perceptions and reactions of Mel Williams to Mrs. Maggie Rex's call are easily understood. His search for parameters to his responsibilities are natural. Even the need to be home on Friday night is understandable. By Friday evening, the typical community school coordinator has put in a sixty-hour week. Afternoon and evening programs, with periodic morning meetings with the school staff and community members, have taken him to the brink of exhaustion. The "burnout" rate for community school coordinators is high, and that rate can be attributed in no small measure to the number of evening hours worked.

The fact that Mel Williams as an individual, and many of his colleagues, are not at their stations on a Friday night can be easily understood on a personal and individual basis. Their absence on sociological or conceptual grounds does not have the same credibility. Closing the school is abandoning the community education concept.

The problem may have its origin in another organizational phenomenon. Individuals want to be regarded as significant persons with meaningful roles. They want to be taken seriously. Increasingly, this sense of self-worth is dependent upon one's position and importance within an organization. Mel Williams and many of his colleagues have followed the traditional pattern of organizational accommodation. They have taken an idea, a program, a concept, and have internalized it and made it their own. As an illustration, when the first community schools were opened in Darrin's Cove, principals and teachers talked of "my" schools and "my" classrooms. The community school

philosophy was an "our school" concept that threatened the "my school" advocates. But 10 years later, one now finds community school coordinators talking about "my" programs. The "my school" concept has returned in the form of two shifts: The "day shift," and the community school or "evening shift." As the idea caught on, the second shift became more than one person could handle. Opportunities, problems, and developments were at every turn. The tendency was to search for assistance. What evolved was a "my staff" mentality. As the "second shift" grew in number, the gulf between the day and night staffs also grew. This division in some schools has become so pronounced that the day faculty in many community schools sees the evening personnel as a separate and somewhat remote unit that simply uses their classrooms in the evenings. Even the faculty members who do double duty working days and evenings have little recognition of common goals and objectives.

Complicating the phenomenon is the fact that everyone else in the school's hierarchy from the principal to the janitor is also searching for an identity—a niche in the bureaucracy. To be taken seriously is to be in control. The trend is clear. In education, the proliferation of titles tied to specific programs is only one illustration. We have Title I teachers, E.S.E.A. teachers, E.M.R. teachers, E.D. teachers, L.S.D. teachers, L.D.teachers, and on and on. But the responsibilities of a given individual often become too great. The original concept becomes too draining for one person. To be in charge, in control of others, becomes all consuming. And everyone knows you cannot control a public of free people.

An egotistical solution might be to scale the concept down to one's own energies and capacity. "I can't do all of this alone!" is a common exclamation. But there are many avenues and alternatives open to the societal thinker that are not apparent to those who internalize and personalize problems. The egocentric thinker must think in terms of self-survival. As the concept gets too burdensome, he must retreat or close up. The societal thinker, on the other hand, searches for alternatives, often through others over whom he has no control. Returning to the illustration of the unanswered telephone at the community school, the addition of an inexpensive mechanical telephone answering service could have been a beginning. Working with other staff members and public agencies in the community to develop a problem-solving network responding to community questions and concerns could also be considered. One might notice that as the possible solution becomes larger in scope and purpose, individual and institutional role-identity becomes increasingly more interrelated. The solutions become more client-centered and less institutional-centered as teams are created to respond to community wants and needs.

No meaningful community service would be performed by blowing the whistle on Mel Williams and other community school coordinators, forcing them to keep school open on Friday nights. A more meaningful community purpose could be served by expecting the principals, community school coordinators, and school faculties, along with other agencies and community service representatives, to devise cooperative, realistic, and responsive services for their constituents, the public. The public can further expect that these services can be offered with little or no additional financial burden.

The issue then becomes not work hours but leadership. Again, it is not who is wrong, but what is wrong. If the community schools are, in fact, embracing the community education concept, a community must be made aware that:

- The public school belongs to them.
- The public schools are responsive to community wants and needs.
- The public schools are available for a broad spectrum of educational, social, cultural, recreational, and service functions.
- The public schools stand ready to share space and human resources with all public and private human service agencies in the community.
- This openness concept affects every aspect, office, and function of the schools.

Once these ideas have been spread throughout a community and citizens have been given the opportunity to assess their needs and establish their priorities, then, and only then, has a community begun to approach the essence of community education. Once this opportunity has been afforded the citizens of Darrin's Cove and other communities in our society, it is far less likely that our multi-million dollar school buildings, with all their facilities, could be closed on a Friday night—the loneliest night of the week for many.

Our lives depend on our being intelligent about means, ends, and consequences. People realize that their security rests in living in the future rather than in the past or the present. Once this is taken seriously, citizens will use the past and present to shape the future. It will dawn on all—professionals and community members alike—that results are achieved when problems receive serious consideration, when frontal assaults are made on substantive problems. It further follows that these assaults must fully utilize the resources at hand and cannot be handcuffed by petty bureaucratic jealousies or individuals who have become bureaucratically muscle-bound. As long as citizens are given a limited view of what schools can and should do, their response will probably continue to be limited in both expectations and fiscal support.

The behavior of only two administrators in the Darrin's Cove story has been analyzed. There are, of course, other actors who played significant roles in the events that led to Maggie's call. There will be those who will fault Maggie. Others will blame the student. One might blame the university center for community education responsible for the educational development and training of many of the school's administrators, including the community school coordinator. The citizen's acceptance of an unresponsive school system could be questioned. Public commitment might also be questioned, in view of the fact that Darrin's Cove Community High School is overcrowded and has been on double sessions for the past 10 years. The citizens of the larger county district of which Darrin's Cove is a part have a long history of turning down bond and millage issues. Public indifference and inertia could become the whipping boy. And problems necessarily exist in large school systems with more than 130 school buildings located in over 25 separate cities and towns. But these factors are separate parts of a complex system, an ecosystem. The notion that the problem would be solved if it could be isolated and the trouble-maker identified warrants challenging. The salient point is that for some problems, a new problem-solving technique is necessary.

When society is confronted with a problem that is multi-faceted, *system-age* thinking is more appropriate than the traditional *analytical* approach to problem solving. In the analytical approach, a complex problem is broken down and solutions to various parts of the problem are then assembled into a solution for the whole. In a sense, analytical thought searches for sets of independent sub-problems, and the solution for the system becomes the sum of the solution of its parts. This approach, which Russell L. Ackoff refers to as "reductionist thinking," works best in "closed systems."

The problems that exist in Darrin's Cove schools are not isolated problems that occur in a vacuum. They are problems that affect the entire ecosystem. The problems that confront Darrin's Cove are problems that require a more synthetic mode of thought—an "expansionist" mode that views all objects, events, and experiences as part of a larger whole. This mode does not negate the parts, but rather focuses on the big picture.

Applying the expansionist mode of thought to the experiences in Darrin's Cove would involve the following line of reasoning. First, Darrin's Cove would be viewed as a system of interrelated elements—a community. There are many elements that form the community: the schools would be one part in the larger set that forms the system, and the family, municipal government, and business and industry might be others.

Secondly, the following assumptions would be made for each set or unit in the system or community:

- The behavior of every organization, institution, and formal and informal group in Darrin's Cove has an effect on the entire community.
- The behavior of every organization, institution, and group in Darrin's Cove has an effect on the other groups. For example, the family influences the school, and vice versa.
- Every possible subgroup of the community is equally interdependent and affects the entire community.

A system, or a community, therefore, is more than the sum of its parts. It is important to understand that membership in the community either increases or decreases the capacity of each part; it does not leave it unaffected.

Once the interdependence of parts in the community is realized and an expansionist view of problem solving undertaken, new vistas open for all concerned. Expansionist problem solvers are more interested in putting things together than they are in taking things apart.

Maggie Rex's concept of community education is expansionist in nature. She is a team builder. She had asked Mel Williams, her community school coordinator, to call together a problem-solving team. Mel and the assistant principal for curriculum replied in large measure with reductionist analytical thinking. They looked for a specific answer, but beyond that, they searched for a specific *person* or *place* to handle the problem. Their behavior on the phone, in all likelihood, typifies their planning behavior: "If it is not my problem, I do not have to deal with it." This mode of thinking is not unique. It is a perception that pervades organizational and institutional problem solving and planning.

An expansionist pattern of thinking could free the individuals involved in the preceding scenario as well as the institutions they represent. Expansionist thinking, when carried to its limits, can find solutions to a problem by placing two problems in juxtaposition. As an illustration, one high school had a large, unlighted parking lot, and senior citizens were finding it difficult and a bit frightening to use the extensive facilities available at the high school during the evening. At the same time, teenagers in the community had few constructive outlets for their boundless energy. Imaginative thinking created a student/senior citizen service group that greeted and escorted the seniors. This expansionist idea benefited both the servers and those being served. The city government, which has limited resources, has since lighted the school parking

lot so that the school can be an integral part of the community's total education, recreation, cultural, social, and service network. This is a simple illustration of expansionist thinking. But once this mode of thought is set into motion, a score of creative alternatives emerge.

A theme that runs through the series of events described in the Darrin's Cove story is that schools, in large measure, are cut off from their clients and other parts of the community system. The school system alone could neither afford nor justify an evening and weekend community service and response system. However, the various public agencies in Darrin's Cove, working together, could easily justify and afford such a network. This approach is based on identifying needs of the community and putting together resources of the total community to address high-priority wants and needs. The concept, in essence, is *synergistic,* expansionist. It is a team approach to problem solving. But note that the members of the team come from a host of agencies and viewpoints, not just the school. Each member of the team must have a power-with, not a power-over, mentality.

A second theme also runs through this single incident: the silent acceptance by citizens and professionals of the school system as it is presently constituted. The acceptance is also accompanied by a strong feeling of resignation. "That's the way things are," people say. "You can't fight the main office." The public's resignation takes the form of:

- student, parent, citizen alienation
- public indifference
- taxpayer revolt
- faculty and administrative staff frustrations
- a mounting trend toward teacher and principal unionization
- a search for state-mandated accountability and minimum competencies
- a search for alternative forms of schooling
- a flight to private schools

That many of the public school teachers and college professors with limited incomes send their own children to private schools is only one indication of the disenchantment many teachers feel about the conditions of their public schools. It's like auto workers not having enough faith in their own product to want to own one.

It seems a bit cliché to discuss the importance of an educated populace to the preservation of a democratic way of life. But in spite of our fundamental beliefs, the public schools of this nation have been allowed to slip further and further away from the communities they serve. The inability of the school establishment to cope with today's problems is most apparent in urban and

suburban communities where societal change has been most dramatic. The schools of large metropolitan areas are in a shambles, and many suburban schools have become large holding areas for the nation's youth.

The rural countryside, with its strong village and town foundations, has, to some degree, escaped the plight of the urban-suburban schools. There are two ironies to be found in the vitality of small town schools. Rural education, at one time in our history, was viewed as the educational wasteland. People migrated to the cities for educational opportunities. Today, the wastelands of our country are found in the core of our cities.

The other irony revolves around the small town and village school system's persistent and misguided attempts to adopt the highly structured, pseudo-scientific management techniques of the large school systems. Alvin Toffler, for one, contends that many of the changes are no more than an attempt to refine the existent machinery, making the schools' hierarchy even more efficient in the pursuit of obsolete goals.[3]

The school's seeming inability to change has many historical, psychological, and sociological roots. But one of the tap-roots most certainly relates to the fact that schools have become increasingly closed systems that look inward for coping techniques. The school's external environment is being closed out. The result is a more unresponsive, irrelevant, and insensitive climate that shuts out community and emphasizes internal control by the establishment. The last vestige of community involvement and control is disappearing in many urban areas, because the boards of education are too preoccupied with legislative affairs to listen and respond to the needs of their constituents.

To expect change to develop from within an establishment is to disregard the lessons of history. Meaningful, substantive changes have historically come from external forces. This is true at all levels of human organizational endeavor. As external forces, the teachers unions are changing the schools. The private media, especially television, change schools. Hollywood's version of society has changed the schools and will continue to do so.

As schools are presently organized, Maggie Rex, Laura Blum, and other parents and citizens in communities across the nation have little or no voice in changing *their* schools. They also have little voice in keeping their schools from changing in ways that are counter to local community sentiments.

This is not a suggestion that the courts have been wrong or that all legislative mandates have been counterproductive. Nor is this a condemnation of the mass media or teacher organizations. The stark fact is that an ***equilibrium is missing***. The ingredient that could restore the equilibrium is a return to meaningful local involvement and legitimate local control of school affairs in cooperation with the other forces that bring pressure to bear upon the schools.

This realization needs more than philosophical airing. It requires a strategy for effectiveness. The strategy is to be found in the community education movement. It is a movement that embraces a strategy for community involvement. It is generally believed that change from within is difficult and often non-existent. It is also believed in some circles that external changes fostered by state and federal governments have been ineffective in improving local education, and have often created additional problems. If these assumptions are valid, then a strategy for developing local community input becomes increasingly necessary. Community education, in spite of inherent difficulties, is a plan with considerable promise. Many professional educators lament the days of local interference in school matters. The possibility of local community control abuse haunts many professional educators. A strong citizens group at the bargaining table does not bode well for the two big teacher union leaders. Even the students realize that if the community really gets involved, many of the things that are now going on in schools that only insiders see would stop. In many schools, citizen and parent visitation is viewed like a visit by the Inspector General. Most schools only hold one visitation a year and, in some, attendance is very low. Schools in many areas have become a disgrace, typified by unruly behavior, dirty lavatories, and insane behavior in the cafeterias. The school "insiders" would like to keep these conditions to themselves, away from public or community scrutiny.

Closed systems are artificially created. To maintain themselves they must be surrounded by a host of artificial regulations and procedures. The universe and all life in it is an open system. Closed systems are a creation of man. In some cases, especially in the field of science, closed systems (laboratories) have worked to improve the human condition. However, in the social sciences, closed systems have seldom, if ever, worked toward improving mankind in general. They generally improve the lot of those within the closed system, but only temporarily. The benefits derived for those within are usually short-lived, resulting in a pseudo-sense of well-being on the part of those holding on to power, wealth, prestige, or control of the closed system.

Ultimately, however, closed systems do not work in areas that rely upon public support in a democratic society. The public will eventually react. Citizens will either retract their financial support of the closed system, demand more openness, or effect changes that shut down the closed system. Public over-reaction often results in "throwing out the baby with the bath water," as evidenced by California's Proposition 13, and Massachusett's Proposition 2 1/2.

Openness

As the fabric of the community education concept takes form, it is important to realize that in addition to the need for institutional responsiveness, there is also a fundamental need for openness. This openness can take many forms, but it must have a high level of community involvement and control. This involvement and control must, in itself, embody the highest level of honesty, openness, and responsiveness.

School officials have many fears about community involvement and control of school matters. School superintendents and principals can recount numerous tales of committees that wanted books destroyed or made unreasonable requests for special concessions. The abuses of band booster clubs, athletic clubs, and other special interest groups are well known. These abuses have truly resulted in "administrative headaches." Some principals have come to view the idea of community involvement as both physical and psychological attacks on their space. But this may be an illustration of a reaction to the wrong problem. By not thinking beyond the apparent problem in search of the real issue and its subsequent effects, the real cause of the abuse may never be addressed.

The administration response to subgroup/special interest group abuses has been a tendency to withdraw from community entirely. Administration ranks are closed, and all types of community involvement and input into decision making are discouraged. Once burned by special interest or pseudo-community involvement, the lesson is simple. The mistake must not be repeated. Community groups and leaders, including the press, are viewed as insatiable. Add to this the fact that in a closed system the managers or the administrators have control over the actions of subordinates. Once the door is thrown open to community involvement in the system's decision-making process, a new set of actors must be dealt with. Closed systems do have one function not found in open systems: they are more easily controlled. Once the door is open to the community, a new set of actors not controllable by the school hierarchy begins to have input.

If the door is opened only partially, which has generally been the case in the past, only a glimpse of community action is witnessed. That glimpse has usually been in the form of a small, often well-organized pressure group with a parochial interest. In a sense this is another closed system in conflict with a larger closed system. This type of special interest pleading has often left the school administrator alone, the sole defender of the fort. He finds himself, often with good motives, standing in the doorway to block the pressure groups for the sake of the school or the community at large.

Given a strong enough group and a school administrator without internal (administrative) or external (community) support, the results can be disastrous for an administrator. The number of administrators who have lost their jobs due to the actions of community pressure groups is surprisingly high. With the possibility of retribution looming large, fewer and fewer school administrators are willing to take the risk. It is safer inside the system, even if the system is completely out of step with the needs of the community. Once this attitude begins to prevail and stories of outside pressures are shared, many colleagues within the system will help nail the door shut to avoid dealing with a demanding external group. These are, however, the same colleagues who wring their hands as they work out purely internal solutions to external pressures like budget cuts.

Bureaucratic Tinkering

In recent years, it has become common practice to solve all educational problems by various internal means. The P.P.B.S. (Plan, Program, Budget, Staff) system was borrowed from business to streamline the educational system from the inside out.

The general attitude of many within the system is that an uneducated and unresponsive community creates many or all of these problems. This constitutes an administrative dilemma of great proportions. The schools and those in charge of schools need the pupils and the citizens. They need their support in every conceivable way. Yet the lesson is clear: "You can't trust the bastards." They'll get out of hand the minute any meaningful sort of openness with the community is adopted.

But have school authorities in large cities and expansive suburban areas really tried openness? Openness is feared, yet (except in small communities where it is as natural as rain) it is largely untried. In a truly open system unreasonable pressure groups would be offset by a body that represented the community as a whole or a group that held a counter-position. Democracy has not let us down. Open communication in an enlightened community with a stake in deciding its own future has a proven track record. Democratic institutions go haywire when one group seizes control and closes off communication.

The public schools of the nation should be one of the last institutions to be accused of cutting off the democratic process. Instead of encouraging open community input regarding matters of substance and priority, the trend has been increasingly toward:

- scientific management
- computer-based decisionmaking
- management by objectives
- reliance on outside (out-of-town) consultants
- priority setting from on high
- internal reorganization
- targeted selection procedures borrowed from behavioral engineering

In all of these, and more, the primary decision maker has become the school establishment, not the general public. Community groups and other "outsiders" find it increasingly difficult to be heard. In many large districts even the teachers view themselves as outsiders. The tendency of teachers who feel they are outsiders has been to organize teachers' groups into strong union organizations. The increasing number of school board members across the nation who owe their allegiance to teachers' union support is only one indication of this trend. Principals are also organizing to protect their interests. The lesson is clear: If an institution closes itself off, it will create outside forces that will batter at its boundaries.

Once this adversary relationship has gained momentum, three consequences can be expected. First, the outside groups will grow in number and power. Second, the outside groups will become increasingly self-serving. Third, the establishment will become increasingly defensive and closed. The paradox of the situation is in the term "outside groups." How can senior citizens, minority groups, the handicapped, business people, teachers, and citizens in general be viewed as outsiders? They are *part* and *parcel* of the human resource fabric that comprises a community system.

Part 5

Myths and Other Obsolete Notions

Myths and Other Obsolete Notions

The existing public educational structure is riddled with myths, mind sets, and orthodoxies that often impede open, creative problem solving. These myths have a way of perpetuating themselves. They tend to engulf new ideas that pose a challenge to the existing structures.

The problem is, in effect, circular. Simply stated, the situation boils down to a condition where myths stifle creative thought and discourage the acceptance of new ideas. But even more devastating, these same myths also have a way of creeping into new concepts in a way that tends to corrupt, co-opt, and trivialize new thinking and new forms. The question then becomes, is it the first or second condition that needs to be addressed?

As a student of community education for the past 30 years, I feel on safer ground in addressing myths about community education. However, the implications of myths affecting the current public school decision-making process should be self-evident to those who toil in the establishment.

Most of the reforms recently called for by the host of commissions are cases in point. The fashionable recommendations for reform include:

- a lengthened school day
- a lengthened school year
- standardized competency testing
- merit pay for teachers
- more homework
- more basic subjects and fewer electives
- emphasis on top-down decision making

These recommendations all have the following characteristics in common:

- They accept school as it is currently instituted.
- They are add-ons or refinements to existing practices.
- They are all school-centered rather than education-centered.

If all these reforms are mandated and effected, the public will be greatly disappointed in the outcome. None of the above reforms are structural—they are simply add-ons to a system that really needs a new process and philosophy.

What, then, are some of the myths that have to be addressed and challenged if a new form of education is to emerge? Here are a few:

MYTH ONE: Community education is another new program that can be added to the existing curriculum.

First of all, community education is not a program. It is a process and a philosophy. Community education is a way of thinking about education that has far-reaching implications for the school curriculum and its relationship to the total community. These implications get to the very core of existing assumptions regarding the education process, and are much broader than could be covered by a single program or a series of programs.

The essence of any sound philosophy is that it asks questions that are analytical and critical, and then presents constructive alternatives. Few keen observers of American education seeking to be analytical, critical, and constructive could view the American public schools today and come away with the conclusion that a single program, or for that matter, a host of programs, could possibly address the serious array of problems that confront the public schools. Yet, as a society, we seem to be searching for that *one* program that will solve the problem or problems that beset the schools. This obsession with program(s) has often resulted in forcing viable new ideas and philosophies (that do not and should not lend themselves to rigid programmatic structures) into narrow, seemingly manageable boxes on an organizational chart.

Viewed in its proper perspective, community education is a movement that concentrates basically on procedural and philosophical matters, rather than upon concrete programs. Admittedly, there is a strong kinship between process and program, but there is also a major distinction. The consequence of not addressing this important distinction has resulted in serious misunderstandings and, in some cases, unfortunate consequences.

Historically, the *process* of community education has introduced procedural changes that have had major implications for programs. When a community begins to ask fundamental questions about education—What is a teacher? What is a school? Who is a learner? Where do people learn? Why do they learn?—one begins to discuss educational issues that advance the concept of schooling into a realm that far transcends solutions like new programs or titles or slogans. The terms "program," "title," and "project" have characterized educational innovations for the past three decades.

Many of the questions posed by citizen philosophers have no ultimate or correct answer. These questions will, however, foster thoughts that result in strategies for problem solving. These strategies will often call for programs. Here lies the close kinship between program and process.

Preface the word "curriculum" with pre-, post-, extra-, or co-, and a concept is developed that suggests that changes must be added before, after, or on top of the *existing* scholastic structure. This "add-on" program approach has resulted in a myriad of new projects and programs in and around the schoolhouse that have not substantively changed the foundation of school.

American public education has become obsessed with tactics. It is so obsessed that it is blinded to new strategies that go beyond the immediate and most obvious problems in search of meaningful long-range solutions. Community education is a *strategy* for change. It is not another tactic, and this distinction must be made if the concept is to maintain its vitality and substance.

Community education is, therefore, *not* an adjunct curriculum. Historically, one means of resisting meaningful change is to assign it to an existing box or to fit it into the existing structure. When this happens the myths held by those doing the assigning have a way of becoming reality, and an exciting and viable process has, in fact, become another program—a "shadow" of the existing school structure. With this administrative orientation, substantive change will not be likely to occur, and the myths will continue. As long as community education is viewed as an add-on, it will pose no threat to those who resist changes in either school or community.

And, increasingly, those with the broader vision will be seen as misfits, impractical visionaries, or poor team members. They may even be forced out. To be serious about paradigm shifts is a risky business in many circles.

MYTH TWO: The terms "education" and "schooling" are synonymous and can be used interchangeably.

The terms are not synonymous. "Education" has a much broader meaning than the word "school." One's education is a result of an interaction between family, peer groups, religious institutions, and the school. In short, an individual's total community educates. To equate schooling with education leads one to all sorts of false expectations and frustrations. Schools alone cannot educate an individual; only a total community system can achieve this complicated end.

Joseph K. Hart said it this way:

> The community is the true educational institution. Within the community there is work that educates and provides for life; within the community are the roots of the cosmopolitanism that marks the truly educated man: within the community there is room for all. . . . The democratic problem in education is not primarily a problem of training children; it is the problem of making a community within which children cannot help growing up to be democratic, intelligent, disciplined to freedom, reverent of the goods of life, and eager to share in the tasks of the age. A school cannot produce this result; nothing but a community can do so.[1]

Schools play a major role in the educational process. With the advent of electronic media, increased mobility, the change in family organization, and the movement toward urban-suburban life, one could assume that the schools' role in relation to the total community must change.

Lawrence A. Cremin sees

> . . . the community as a network of institutions, many of which educate in the way a family, a church, or a library educates. By their very nature these institutions organize people's lives and people's views of the world in such a way that people are inevitably shaped by them. And so a community is a group of intersecting and interlocking institutions, many of which are educative and all of which, in one way or another, shape the behavior of the people involved in them. You see, if we think of education as the deliberate, systematic, and sustained effort to transmit, evoke, or acquire knowledge, attitudes, values, skills, and sensibilities, then we can't help but take into account the large number of institutions in the community that educate. After all, schools and colleges are not the only institutions that educate. Families and churches educate; museums and libraries educate; summer camps and settlement houses educate. Moreover, consciously or not, these institutions tend to relate to one another in what I have come to call "configurations of education."[2]

MYTH THREE: The terms "community education" and "community school" are synonymous: If a community has a community school, then it must have community education.

This is not necessarily so. The terms are interrelated but *not* synonymous. Community education is a strategy for change that attempts to mobilize all the human and physical resources of a given community toward the improvement of individual and community life. Illustrations of poor intra-community communications, unnecessary duplication, petty turfism, blind adherence to tradition, selfishness, and lack of vision on the part of individuals and bureaucrats have proven formidable obstacles to efforts to develop an effective community system.

If the citizens' goal is mobilization, cooperation, and maximum use of all resources for the total good of all individuals within a community, one institution that is obviously under-utilized is the public school. Opening schools to all segments of the public for education, recreation, and cultural activities is fundamental to the community school movement.

In most cases, the emphasis to open the school is generated by an acceptance of the community education philosophy. However, community education is a much broader concept than simply schools that are open to the public.

The premise that the school must set an example by cooperating, mobilizing, and communicating with other "community systems" is the basis of the community school thrust. The acceptance of this thrust by other community agencies and institutions, both public and private, is the essence of the community education philosophy. Community education is, therefore, a much broader concept than community schools and is not necessarily school-based or school-initiated. The school is viewed as only one part of a new orientation toward developing human potential and community vitality.

The late Bill Godette, an honored community educator from Dade County, Florida, once suggested that schools are generally facility-rich but personnel-poor. Other agencies in the community—for example, community recreation departments—are often facility-poor and personnel-rich. The process of bringing these two resources together for the educational, recreational, cultural, and social enrichment of a community is an example of implementing the community education philosophy. The schools could be on their way to becoming community schools, and the community could be making strides toward developing community education. However, simply because a school has a cooperative agreement with a recreation department or uses school facilities for community recreation purposes, one cannot conclude that this arrangement means the community has either community schools or community education. If the above pact is viewed as a one-time project, it is not likely that the community education philosophy has been accepted by the community's institutional managers.

MYTH FOUR: If a school is open at night, it is a community school.

This is by no means so. Many schools have excellent evening adult education programs and well-defined working agreements with the local recreation department. Both of these are admirable ends but, in themselves, they do not constitute a community school. The fact that a person wears new and expensive shoes does not make him well dressed. The fact that a school offers evening classes and special activities does not necessarily make it a community school!

The identification problem stems from attempts to judge or define a community school by its *programs* rather than by its total developmental *process*. One illustration may help clarify this troublesome bias. Many community schools have child care centers. Other schools have child care centers, but they are not community schools. Consequently, if one judges a community school by the single criterion of whether or not it has a child care center, the point is missed.

The substantive question is one of procedure (process) rather than program or outcome. Is there a high incidence of working parents? Is there a problem with latchkey children returning home to an empty house? Has the problem been identified by local citizens and addressed through an open procedure? Have community resources been appropriately identified and mobilized? Was a strategy for the solution of the problem developed and implemented? Do the citizens know that the same procedural alternatives are available for addressing other community and school problems? These are process questions that give a community and its school vitality and flexibility.

In addressing the problem, whether child care, health care, or any other issue, a sense of community is fostered. A procedure for solving a local problem is instituted and embraced. Wheels begin to turn. The etiology of a child care program created by this process is entirely different from one in which a single agency selects a school as a site to offer assistance to working parents.

Once the processes of identifying community needs and addressing them through the use of community resources have been established, it is difficult to envision a school building that would be closed at night. Turning on the lights is a symbol. Opening the school is, too. Both are results of some very definite and deliberate procedures and community processes. The lighted school is a means to an end, not an end in itself.

MYTH FIVE: A *good* community school can be judged solely by reviewing the number of courses, activities, and programs held after school or in the evening.

Participation is *one* good way of measuring interest, involvement, and community acceptance. However, any judgment based solely on the number of offerings and participants touches only the surface of a truly effective community school. Participation data provides no evidence of the impact the community school has had on the following concerns:

- The effect on the total school curriculum and whether the children are benefiting from community involvement.
- The role of citizens in deciding what is wanted and needed in a given community.
- Whether the programs and activities are serving various segments of the community or just an affluent or influential group that can afford or demand the current programs.
- The scope of the program and how applicable it is to local wants and needs.

- Whether the programs listed and publicized are addressing substantive community problems and issues, or whether they are merely a form of societal and institutional avoidance behavior: "Throw 'em a basketball, keep their minds off the real problems."

Communities will differ and so should the community schools. One question is central: Does the school make a difference in the lives of people in that community?

An effective school principal aided by a community school coordinator will help the local community advisory council develop a community profile. This profile will portray the character of the community in terms of age, ethnic background, socio-economic station, and other important dimensions. All measures of evaluating an effective community school must be projected against this background and community profile. To do less than this could stifle the vitality of the concept. A solely quantitative, questionnaire type of evaluation is not sufficient for the development of an effective community school. Needs assessment must be personal, hands-on, and continuous.

MYTH SIX: A community can have an effective, viable community school program without local community involvement.

This is impossible. There may be a good extended-day program with all sorts of activities going on in and around the school, but the absence of a meaningful and open method for citizen participation in problem solving and decision making cuts out the very heart of a community school.

It is important to remember that once a responsive process is in place, certain programs may be absent, but there may still be a quality community school. Some community schools have extensive adult education programs; others do not. Some have activities and nutritional programs for senior citizens; others do not. The number of citizens of a specific age or ethnic or educational background varies from one local community to another. Thus, the schools' offerings vary, too. These variations give each community school a special profile. However (and this is a very important consideration), the variation, the emphasis, the differences found in community schools cannot be a result of administrative fiat. The superintendent, principal, or community school coordinator cannot individually or collectively make these decisions. These differences must reflect the input of the community. A democratic process must be in existence if there is to be a community school. In short, a community school's program must be the result of a democratic process in that school and community. Furthermore, assessments and evaluations of the program's effectiveness and viability must involve the clients. Reports from administrators

to other administrators at a higher level regarding effectiveness simply are not effective. Meaningful planning and evaluation must involve the community if the school is to be a community school.

MYTH SEVEN: Citizen involvement will bring about disorder and fragmentation of purpose in American public education. Sharing the decision-making process with local citizens is a serious threat to professional educators and to high academic standards.

This myth stems from an establishment fallacy that educational decision making is the prerogative of only certain segments of the population, primarily *certified* professionals. The belief that those inside the system should do the decision making is widely held by many who hold certification.

Historically, problems in our society have stemmed from a lack of openness rather than too much democracy. At least three major population groups converge at the schoolhouse door—citizens, professional educators (including both teachers and administrators), and students. The commonwealth is not well served if any one of these groups, or any other single pressure group, be it unions or political parties, seizes the decision-making process. The community interest is best served by a procedure that ensures open, honest dialogue among *all* members of a community. This means, to the dismay of some, that the unschooled must be included. Note the term "unschooled" rather than "uneducated." In each community many people are well educated, and extremely knowledgeable and wise, but have little or no schooling. Paradoxically, one may also find those who are very schooled, and who hold certificates to prove it, but who are not very educated. And wisdom is entirely another matter. The participation of a total community—the possessed and the dispossessed, the rich and the poor, the schooled and the unschooled—is essential to sound community school decision making. In short, if you want individuals or groups to accept change they must feel that they were involved in it. If you want them to welcome change they must feel they have initiated it.

For too long the public has been closed out of its schools. Much of the disarray that characterizes American public education is due to limited vision on the part of the narrow segment of the population that has seized governance of the school. Community education attempts to restore an equilibrium among the various elements that should share in the leadership of the schools.

Historically, forces for change have usually come from outside the institution. It is ironic that in the mid-1980s, we have evolved or dissolved to the point where the forces for school change are coming from the community, and this is being perceived in many establishment circles as an *outside force*. Students of history will be puzzled by this sociological absurdity.

MYTH EIGHT: The existence of a citizens advisory council at each school will automatically ensure effective community involvement and a viable community education process.

This has not been the case. Many school districts, notably in Florida and California, have had local school citizens advisory councils at each school for several years. In many areas these councils are merely paper councils, serving no school or community purpose. They are often dominated by the school administration, and they deal with few questions of substance. The council is whipped into a mold that fits the administrative style of school authorities, and community concerns are not given credence. They have become administration-dominated councils that lack the vitality of other community school organizations such as the PTA and PTSA. In many places, citizen advisory councils have replaced viable PTA's, which has caused some concern and resentment by leaders who support the grassroots involvement that has characterized local PTA movements.

Developing a truly democratic process is complicated. No one would suggest that the creation of a forum for dialogue will ensure the exchange of ideas. It is only a step in a long series of growth experiences that must be constantly defined and redefined. But in these experiences, a community and its members grow, become empowered, and share progress with one another.

There are some essentials that must be given strong consideration if a council is to be effective. Councils must have individual and group skills in:

- goal determination
- goal setting
- goal achievement
- goal evaluation

These, like other principles of problem solving, are learned skills. They are also skills that must be constantly honed and polished. Organizational *renewal* is an important consideration in what can be viewed as a fluid experience. These considerations are almost axiomatic in all organizations. The major difference in a community school organization is that the organizational boundaries have been pushed out. The participation base has been expanded to include the clients of the school.

To assume that this new organization will automatically find itself and function effectively is not realistic. It is true that the addition of new dimensions will enhance and enrich the organization. However, to rely too heavily or solely upon the newly expanded boundaries that a community school creates is a mistake. Well-conceived plans for pre-service and in-service training for a citizens' council must accompany any ventures into school/community problem solving.

MYTH NINE: It strengthens the community school concept to have a special advisory council for the consideration of after-school issues and another council for regular day, or K–12, issues.

There are still many who believe that two or more advisory councils are needed. This is usually based on the perception that the primary role of schools is the education of children. The existence of two, three, or more advisory councils tends to perpetrate the myth that the community school is that part of an educational program tacked on as an extended part of a school's offering. It views the community school as a program that starts at the end of the regular day. At best, under this orientation, the community school council is that "other" council that deals with after-school, extra-curricular evening enrichment activities. We have, in effect, reinforced the three-o'clock barrier. One may safely predict that high priority will be afforded the things that happen during the "regular" school day. Community school, therefore, is added as the frosting on the cake, if and when funds are available for either cake or frosting.

One often hears the phrase "umbrella concept" come up in discussions of community education. Community education embraces all the educational, cultural, recreational, and social opportunities within a given community. The community school is the embodiment of the umbrella concept as it relates to a given school and campus.

In some circles, however, the umbrella is viewed in a much more restricted sense. In some states and school districts, adult education is viewed as the umbrella—with community education as a single panel in that umbrella. This limited view of education gives rise to a proliferation of specific, narrowly defined councils. Advisory councils are formed on just about every conceivable topic and program. Each council addresses a narrow, parochial interest. People of action—the doers in society—find too many councils are a brake on progress, a waste of time. In a sense, by having literally dozens of advisory councils dealing with specific areas, the following conditions are created:

- The "overloading" of the circuit.
- The perpetuation of fragmented planning and self-interest.
- The reinforcement of petty organizational rivalries.
- The development of internecine battles.
- An inability to focus on the interactive nature of most problems.
- An enhanced likelihood of establishment (manager) manipulation.

Research indicates that the best advisory councils have the support of the school principal and other agency leaders. One cannot logically expect school or agency administrators to heed the advice and recommendations of more than one advisory council. The key here is that the *one* council must be representative and its scope broad enough to address community-wide problems and opportunities.

MYTH TEN: Community education is the frosting on educational cake.

Too often this myth has become reality due to behavior based on this false assumption. If people believe something is true, they will behave in ways that will fulfill their expectations. Many school board members, administrators, teachers, and community members see the community schools as "the second family car," a luxury that must go in times of austerity.

In reality, community schools, rather than being a frill, should be addressing problems that are concerns of school and community. They are not, and should not, be considered a luxury only wealthy school districts can afford. Stated very simply, the community school concept is a philosophy that envisions:

- Meaningful adaptation to a changing society.
- Community involvement in decision making.
- Maximum utilization of community resources.
- Maintenance, improvement, or creation of a sense of community that serves as the foundation upon which schools are based.
- Avoidance of unnecessary duplication.
- Creation of new, exciting forces and forms through the consolidation of existing forces and forms (the concept of synergy in human and community development).
- A sense of belonging and recognition through a policy of opening doors to all age groups.
- Promotion of the use of under-utilized public resources.
- Commitment to mobilize local resources to fight crime, drug abuse, disorganization, apathy, and other community problems.
- Creation of broad, citizen-based evaluation procedures.

A case is often made that the primary function of schools is "the education of children." All else is secondary. Even if one were to grant this assumption, the above goals cannot be seen as secondary. They are neither the "frosting on the cake" nor "after-school activities": nor are they idealistic notions. They are concepts that strike at the heart of the educational process.

It is high time that public school people get out of their schoolhouses and begin addressing substantive problems that affect both school and community. It is equally important for citizens to get into the schools and lend moral and financial support to one of the primary institutions that stands between a free and vibrant society and a total catastrophe that could end the democratic idea. The challenge becomes the development of an educated community to serve as a base for sound schooling of all individuals.

Why have these and other myths about education in general and community education in particular developed and persisted? Why does there appear to be so much misunderstanding about the real meaning of community education? It is possible that the basic reason is that community education is the first proposed change in education to come along in recent years that actually calls upon professional educators and the public to question the traditional practices and arrangements that comprise current schooling patterns.

Educational reform and school innovations have been fragmented. Community education offers a strategy that posits an "ecological view" of educational improvement. This is not an easy way to view reality. We have traditionally viewed problems one at a time, reducing them to manageable size. We have separated variables and reasoned in predominantly linear terms. Now, along comes a concept that is nonlinear. It is interactive, integrated, and expansionist in thinking. It is based on a concern for the entire "ecosystem" rather than a single part or function. For many this is uncomfortable. It is much more comfortable to rely on the tried-and-true tactics.

The myths that have developed about community education testify to the nature of popular thinking about education. Education is seen as schooling, because schools are understandable. They have definite parameters, and the notion persists that one can only add to the existing structure, not change its central focus.

It is not so much a different school that is needed but a new and different form of education. The very confusion on the part of the public and the profession over the problems of today's education practices has been highly provocative. For the first time in a long time, both those in and out of the educational profession are asking what is meant by education. As we seek solutions to these questions, the inadequacy of the present schoolhouse education stands out in bold relief. Until the shortcomings of present school-limited concepts of education are recognized, educational progress will be dominated by minor, tactical changes that leave the basic strategy unchanged. In a striking way, the community education movement is shaping a *new* educational strategy.

Part 6

Who Dares, Wins

Chapter Contents

Behind the Lines
Core Beliefs for Community Educators
Community Education Principles

Who Dares, Wins

The Sovereign has been a call for the return of public education to the public—the people it was designed to serve. Inherent in this position is a strong belief in the American sense of fair play. Wrapping this book up from Ibiza, in the Spanish Balearics, gives me a new appreciation of the uniqueness of America and its 200-year-old tradition of freedom of thought and enterprise. It helps to step back—to be away—to appreciate the uniqueness of America's democratic experience.

Ibiza is a Western European vacation magnet. Every summer, Dutch, French, German, Danish, English, Irish, Scottish, and Spanish tourists cohabit with the native Catalonian peoples. My conversations with new foreign friends here often involve comparisons of freedom in America to the new "free Spain" since Franco. I'm often told that Spain needs a new Franco to clean up the beaches, streets, and social excess that both attract and repel European visitors. Then the conversation turns to the perceived excesses of freedom in the United States. The questions imply not only admiration for America's free enterprise system, but deep concern that too much freedom has brought chaos to America. "Is 'Hill Street Blues' true?" they ask. "Have Americans completely lost a sense of community and family? What about the black riots and violence? Has all this freedom made Americans as selfish as the characters on 'Dallas' and 'Dynasty'? Are Americans a bunch of cowboys with an itchy trigger finger on the nuclear button?"

In most of these conversations, there is one question implied: Has America become so open-minded its brains are falling out?

Freedom and openness are powerful forces in the democratic process. What Europeans want to know is whether a free and open democratic society can find an equilibrium of responsibility to both the individual and community. Many people both abroad and at home seem to have some serious doubts. They'd opt for strong men, state controls, authoritarian systems to end the perceived chaos. In a sense they would like it both ways—the freedom of the West and the controls of Bulgaria, where streets and beaches are clean and safe.

Can this dichotomy be resolved? I believe it can. America's rich tradition of individual freedom, balanced with a history of building community, must stay the course. For if America cannot, it may lose the world's last chance.

One battlefield for saving our democratic, communal virtues is the public schools. This book is dedicated to those who would dare to stem the tide of selfish individualism, who would refuse to abandon community. This view is not just a platitude, it is a beacon. And this book might be a blueprint for action.

Both the vision and the blueprint have a rich, living history. The community education philosophy that calls for citizens to open America's schools is promulgated today by armies of activists and advocates. Convinced that public schools should be receptive—psychologically and physically—to the people they serve, American community educators have fanned out across the nation in the years since the first steps in Flint. Today, in almost every community in America, thousands of professional educators and citizen philosophers strengthen and broaden the movement.

Who are these educators? They are activists, and survivors: they're the few who have managed to stand up to an educational establishment unprepared for, even threatened by, their ideas. There have been many veterans who, overwhelmed by institutional disinterest, left the schools in their prime to pursue other occupations. Others have been beaten down by the bureaucracy, placed in small bureaus, reined in. As every community educator knows, the road to opening the schools to the public is rocky. But in spite of bureaucratic and authoritarian obstacles, the idea manages to survive and thrive in many locales.

Behind the Lines

Community education practitioners in thousands of school districts all across America make up a formidable force of freedom fighters for public education. But behind the lines, institutions and individuals have provided essential reinforcements.

The Pendell Publishing Company, which published many of the early works on community education, has for decades promoted the understanding of philosophical and practical issues in the field under the leadership of Richard Pendell and Shirley Pendell. Richard Pendell, a distinguished World War II veteran, tried teaching but found the system lacking in daring. So he turned to the printing business, and eventually created his own publishing house. In the mid-1960s, he was captivated by the imagination of a small cadre of community educators and their fledgling organization, the National Community School Education Association. (The NCSEA later became the NCEA—the National Community Education Association.)

With an abiding faith in free enterprise and a deep commitment to community, the Pendells threw their personal and business resources behind the democratic ideals of community education, publishing dozens of important works on the subject. Richard was also the prime mover and founder of the International Community Education Association. Now retired from the business world, the Pendells continue to champion local, state, national, and international community education endeavors.

But community education publishing is not a one-shop operation. The literature of the field is extensive and varied, ranging from global to local efforts. The curious reader will find in the bibliography appended here a wealth of useful information. But the bibliography is meant only as a starter kit. One reference will lead the learner/teacher to new sources.

Additional exploration will also lead one quickly to the Mott Foundation—the other great disseminator of community education information. As the Pendells directed the development of a new literature in the 60s and 70s, the Mott Foundation began to create a network of centers for community education at state universities and, in some cases, state departments of education. From a nucleus of fifteen Mott-supported regional university centers for community education, a network of centers for community education now blankets the nation. There is a center in every state and in most Canadian provinces. This network is linked by CENET, a computerized network, through which centers share their successes and their failures.

The centers are autonomous, focusing on the concerns of their home states and provinces. The obstacles to public involvement in education in Alaska and Montana are, of course, different from those in California or New York. Local issues vary, and in the tradition of community education, the network has avoided one-solution answers to community initiatives. What all centers share, however, is the commitment to community/school excellence, with citizens and professionals working together as teachers and learners.

Sharing the same commitment is the National Community Education Association and a National Center for Community Education housed in Flint, Michigan—both also Mott-supported. Like the centers, these organizations don't seek to provide national prescriptions for community problems. What these groups do is act as a clearinghouse for community education, identifying and developing local resources and talents.

The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation has supported the national network for 20 years. This long-lasting advocacy of education innovation is, in itself, an unparalleled commitment by a philanthropic foundation. But even with

support, community educators have had to struggle for acceptance. There are countless illustrations of how the ideas of democratic participation, openness, and creativity fostered by the foundation have been smothered by the very institutions, universities, and state departments that have accepted funds in the name of community education. To their credit, C. S. Harding Mott, Chairman of the Board of Directors; William S. White, President; and the Mott Foundation Board of Trustees have resisted numerous temptations to "put the screws down" and get all grantees to march to the same drummer. This broad-minded approach sends a potent signal across the country: that community education respects the people's right to shape their own idea of education.

The title of this chapter, "Who Dares, Wins," is pinched from the British Special Air Service, a small non-traditional British service force. Pendell Publishing and the Mott Foundation, after decades of daring, are finally winning support and recognition for innovation in education. And so are the practitioners—practitioners who dared to cut through the problems and do something different when the existing patterns no longer worked. Advocating a paradigm shift, a return to democratic community control, citizen involvement, and participation in the workings of the schools, they have come out winners with the public.

Core Beliefs for Community Educators

Larry Horyna, one of the most respected community educators in America, once reminded an audience at an Oregon conference that no one has a franchise on the term "community education." Community education is not a thing, he said, but a conceptual framework. It is a philosophical approach to working *with* and *in* the community. The philosophy of community education hangs together in a common, yet flexible, set of beliefs.

1. Learning is a lifelong process.
2. Education cannot be segregated from the broader community in which we live. The community educates; the media educates; the family, the church, the neighborhood, street gang, peer group, and school all educate. We experience influences, both good and bad, from many different directions.
3. Every community has an abundance of untapped human skills and an equal abundance of underutilized physical resources. Formal learning for children can be greatly enhanced by the involvement of parents and community members at large.

4. Programs and services should grow out of the expressed concerns of that particular community. Local involvement in making decisions about those services is essential. Programs are created to serve people and should be a response to the people they serve.
5. Every community has the potential to become more livable than it is currently; this process of change is a constant struggle.
6. The quality of community life can best be measured by the way that people relate to one another.

How then do these basic philosophical beliefs translate to a strategy for working in the community? Again, Horyna is succinct in his outline of "seven principles that have been hammered out over the years by community educators working in and with community."

Community Education Principles

- *The Principle of Self-determination:* Local people are in the best possible position to determine what they need and want, and, to the degree possible, they should be involved in making those judgments.
- *The Principle of Decentralization:* Programs, services, activities, and events that are brought closest to where people live have the greatest potential for high levels of public participation. To the degree possible, such activities should be decentralized to multiple locations for easy public access.
- *The Principle of Self-help:* People are best served when they have the capacity to serve themselves. People should be encouraged and allowed to assume ever-increasing responsibility for their own well-being, thereby building independence rather than dependence.
- *The Principle of Integrated Service Delivery*: Those organizations and agencies that operate for the good of the public can better utilize their limited resources, meet their own goals, serve the public through close working relationships with other organizations and agencies that do the same kind of work.
- *The Principle of Maximum Resource Utilization:* The physical, financial, and human resources of every community must be utilized to the fullest if the diverse needs and interests of the community are to be met. And this never-ending quest to maximize the use of our limited resources is something that concerns us on a daily basis.

- *The Principle of Total Community*: Within the context of community education, the segregation of people by virtue of age, income, sex, race, ethnicity, religion, or other factors, inhibits the total development of the community. To the degree they are seen as possible programs, activities and services within the communities should incorporate the broadest possible cross-section of community residents.
- *The Principle of Institutional Responsiveness:* All public institutions have been created to serve people. Such institutions have a responsibility to develop their respective programs and services around the continuously changing needs and interests of their constituents.

These are not radical ideas. They mesh with the democratic experience that is America. But to implement these ideals in many of America's public schools calls for a paradigm shift—a shift away from existing administrative and organizational practice. Public grassroots involvement must be given higher priority—much higher priority than the centralized bureaucracy is willing, today at least, to concede.

Epilogue

As *The Sovereign* goes to press, a number of school districts are following the Carnegie-sponsored recommendations to empower the teaching profession. Superintendent Joseph Fernandez of the Dade County Public Schools has proclaimed that involving teachers in the decision-making process will be innovative enough to draw national attention to his schools. Fernandez is not alone in his efforts to do something, beyond increasing salaries, for a beleaguered faculty—a faculty that often refers to its members as "classroom teachers." But one of the key ingredients to meaningful change is missing. "Classroom teacher" is at best an archaic term, at worst an oxymoron. No vision of education should be confined to the four walls of a classroom.

There is no question that faculties, especially those in large urban districts, are suffering from a sense of alienation and disenchantment. Understanding that a disenchanted work force can wreak havoc on the quality of education, teachers' union leaders and some school administrators have begun advocating the involvement of teachers in the decision-making process. And there is little doubt that this new attitude is long overdue. But the missing ingredient in this "empowerment movement" is the community, the citizens, the clients, the customers, the sovereigns.

A stronger alliance between school administrators and the faculty, usually through the faculty's union leadership, will spawn some creative ideas. A faculty that is given a chance to "buy in," become stockholders in the decision-making process, will be taking a step in the right direction.

The same consideration must now be applied to the public—a public equally disenthralled with American education. As Daniel J. Boorstin wrote in the article, "Democracy's Secret Virtue," "Democracy is government by amateurs. The progress—perhaps even the survival—of our society depends on the vitality of the amateur spirit in the U.S.A. today and tomorrow."[1]

Boorstin contends that

> [t]he two new breeds whose power and prestige menace the amateur spirit are the 'professionals' and the 'bureaucrats.' Both are byproducts of American wealth, American progress. But they can stifle the amateur spirit on which the special quality and vision of our American leaders must depend.[2]

Education has been referred to as a dismal science by many, including former Commissioner of Education William Bennett. But teaching, like medicine, is not a science; it is an *art*. If policy makers pursue the notion that education is a science, then it follows that it can be controlled by the professional and the bureaucrat—and we will continue to get dismal results.

Education restructuring, or a paradigm shift in education policies, is not easy to come by, as the past decade has illustrated. Opening schools—community schools—to the wants and needs of their constituents will require a renewed trust in the uncommon wisdom of the common man. One of the results will be a new openness and a new sense of freedom of choice. Opening the public schools in the evenings, weekends, and during the summer months will add new degrees of freedom and opportunity for citizens.

The freedom to explore, to create, to be all that one can be, must extend to principals, faculty, students, and citizens, from early morning into the evening. The artistry and talent found in every school community will be given an opportunity to emerge. Teaching, in a community where all members are both teachers and learners, will take on new prestige. And the public will start to understand that educating the community is not a science; it is an art. And the state of the art in education is community education.

Notes

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America has no well-defined strategy for public education. Our test scores are dismal, our teachers discouraged, our business and political leaders worried about the future. The only solutions suggested by the education establishment involve more control: state-approved teachers, state-mandated curriculum, state-selected tests. No one is really hopeful about the outcome of these centralized efforts.

Vasil M. Kerensky, professor of education at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton, believes that the only way to salvage our public schools is to return them to the public, to the sovereign people envisioned by the founding fathers.

The idea of an *educative community*—a community that values and supports lifelong learning for everyone—is called community education. The community education concept is opposed by those whose main problem and goal is to protect their own job security and their own turf, Kerensky says. But education is not synonymous with schooling, he argues. Productive learning occurs not just in state-regulated schools but in the rich voluntary life of the community. And effective educators know how to tap these vast community resources to reach every learner, from the youngest infant to the most senior citizen.

The stakes—for ourselves, our children, and our country—are enormous, Kerensky believes. Free citizens of a democratic nation must reclaim their communities' schools, now.

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